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Curriculum planning and decision making process in secondary schools in Malawi.

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CURRICULUM PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI

A Dissertation Presented

By

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I dedicate this work to my beloved wife Alice,

and my children Dalitso, Tinenenji and Dipo.

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ABSTRACT

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IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI

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Effective curriculum planning and decision making process is key to the success of educational programs. The problem with centralized educational systems is that, at the curriculum planning level, the system does not have sufficient data about the needs of the learner, teachers, and the expectations of the society at large for effective curriculum planning to take place. At the implementation level, the system does not give teachers the needed flexibility to implement the curriculum.

The major purpose of this study was to investigate curriculum decision making process in Malawi. The research procedures used in this study consisted of systematic document analysis and interviews with selected educators. In addition, a survey of opinions of students, parents, teachers, and heads of schools was conducted.

The findings of the study confirmed that the curriculum planing and decision making process in Malawi is

centralized. It also found that curriculum planning and development process for the secondary school curriculum was not fully systematised.

At the school level, heads of schools and teachers had very little say about the curriculum. The implementation of the curriculum was, therefore, not flexible enough to allow the curriculum to be modified to suit local conditions while at the same time meeting the nationally developed objectives.

The following were some of the recommendations the study made:

- Decisions about the curriculum should be broadly based.
- The responsibility for national curriculum development should be vested in the hands of the Malawi Institute of Education.
- The Ministry of Education and Culture should gradually institute a school-based management strategy in order to improve the effectiveness of schools.
- Lines of communication between the school and the Ministry headquarters should be improved.
- In order to encourage the application of knowledge and skills into practice, there is need to continue refining performance based assessment techniques for appraising student performance and for placement.

It is hoped that the decentralization process now taking place within the education sector, will take into

consideration the above recommendations in order to improve the quality of secondary education in Malawi.

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NATURE OF THE STUDY

Statement of the Problem

Curriculum decision making in secondary schools in Malawi is centralized. In general, centralized systems follow a "top-down" decision making process where decisions are made at the top or center without meaningful involvement of people at the bottom or periphery. Advocates of the top-down strategy believe that people in general resist change and require direction and structure so as to work efficiently and effectively. It follows, then, that it is management's responsibility to design a curriculum that it deems appropriate and implement it thoroughly by directives from the top. Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) also claim that in a high-control system such as mentioned above, four ingredients seem to be responsible for success:

> administrative advocacy, high prescriptiveness, good administrative 'engineering' of the implementation process and strong back-up assistance (in Marsh and Huberman, 1984).

Similar options like the 'Power-coercive' strategy of Chin and Benne (1969), Leithwood's (1981) Growth-system action model, Havelock's (1971) Research, development and dissemination model, and Schon's Center-Periphery model offer alternatives to centralized decision making.

Critics of the top-down approach state that the problem with this approach can be analyzed at the planning and implementation levels. At the planning level, because of the system's inadequate "bottom-up" information flow, it does not have sufficient data base about the needs of the learners, teachers' opinions about certain aspects of the curriculum or the needs and expectations of the society at large, for effective rational curriculum planning to take place. At the implementation level, information about curriculum development and implementation, is usually diluted and distorted by the time it reaches the user system (schools) because of bureaucratic red-tape, and the hierarchical structure of the system. As a result, schools do not have sufficient information to effectively implement the curriculum. Even when meaningful information is available, the fact that it is highly prescriptive, and does not give teachers the needed flexibility at the implementation stage and thus leads to no significant classroom level change (Mclaughlin and Marsh 1978: Fullan 1981, 1982). The absence of strong back-up assistance and good administrative "engineering", renders the 'top-down' approach to decision making vulnerable at the implementation stage.

For example, writing about the centralized educational system in Venezuela in the sixties prior to the country's

educational reforms, Gross (1968), noted three major consequences of administrative centralization:

1. Inefficiency - It took a long time for a routine request from a local school to move all the way up the hierarchy and back with a decision. Overwhelming lack of co-ordination among major units within the Ministry of Education compounded the problem.
2. System Rigidity - Standardized procedures almost governed all processes at all levels. For example, the same curriculum was used in the urban and rural areas, mountains and jungles, sea coast and great plains. Teachers were not allowed to introduce their own modifications to suit the individual school environments.
3. Lack of participation - Regional and local participation by educators and citizens practically did not exist.

Although the above consequences were peculiar to Venezuela, it can, nonetheless, be argued that these factors often prevail in other centralized systems. The only difference would be the degree to which they occur.

The lack of a well articulated bottom-up approach to curriculum planning and implementation, also means that teachers may feel alienated by the system because they are not involved from the initial stages of the curriculum

planning process. It has been argued that when teachers are involved in planning the curriculum they are committed to the success of the program. Finally, the lack of a bottom-up approach to curriculum decision making process may deprive the system of evaluative data, from students, parents and teachers, about the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was three fold. First, the current curriculum planning and implementation making in Malawi were investigated in order to determine the extent to which the system is centralized. The Second, the role of students, parents, teachers, and heads of schools in curriculum decision was identified. Finally, strategies for meaningful involvement of students, parents, teachers and heads of schools, in curriculum decision making, were developed.

One reason for investigating the decision making process in Malawi is that the concept of top-down versus bottom-up decision making needs refinement (Marsh and Huberman, 1984). It is possible to have bottom-up levels within top-down administrations or top-down levels within bottom-up administrations. In other words, when analyzing educational systems, we should not fall into the trap of associating *prima facie*, a centralized systems with only

top-down decision making, or a decentralized system with only bottom-up decision making. A more careful analysis is needed because some systems have both bottom-up and top-down levels of decision making.

Specifically, three research questions gave direction to the study. They are:

- To what extent is curriculum decision making in Malawi centralized?
- How are students, parents, teachers, and heads of schools currently involved in curriculum decision making?
- What are some of the strategies that may be used to make involvement of students, parents, teachers and heads of schools in curriculum decision making more meaningful in the future?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will be used to guide the inquiry:

Policy is defined as a standing decision characterized by behavioral consistency and repetitiveness on the part of both those who make it and who abide it. Heinz, Eulau and Prewitt, (1962) operationally define policy as a statement of intention which guides and shapes an organization's course of action.

Decision making is a process by which one chooses between two or more available alternative courses of action for the purposes of attaining a goal(s). Decision making here implies not only involvement but also control of a particular process. Thus, if teachers are involved in decision making, their role would not only be that of resource persons to curriculum planners, rather, it would entail working with those people on equal basis. Types of decision making in curriculum evolve around the following: development of program objectives; development of curriculum materials, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum.

Planning is deciding in advance what is to be done; a plan, in other words, is a projected course of action. From a process point of view, planning is the preparation of a set of action in the future directed at achieving goals by preferable means.

Curriculum planning is the process of defining the desired ends and outcomes of education and formulating principles and guidelines for reaching the stated desired educational ends. Since education affects and is influenced by other sectors of the country, curriculum planning also involves the determination of curriculum parameters such as institutional context, target population and time and costs. It also involves a review of the constraints under which the curriculum will operate. A constraint in this

system because it has a set of components (one of which is the curriculum planning and decision making process), organized in a such a way as to constrain action toward the accomplishment of the purposes for which the system exists - the production of educated individuals. Effectiveness is defined as the extent to which goals are achieved. As such, effectiveness is synonymous with performance. Effectiveness is frequently confused with efficiency and viceversa. Effectiveness measures the degree of goal attainment where as efficiency measures how well resources are are being utilized. In other words, efficiency is the ratio of output to input. Effectiveness, therefore, does not necessarily imply efficiency. A system may be effective but very inefficient if it attains its goal at a tremendous expense. On the other hand, a system may be efficient (make the best use of resources) but remain ineffective (not achieve its objectives).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies on the grounds that it will bring to the forefront current curriculum planning and development methods used in Malawi. By doing so, the study will articulate those methods that are viable in bringing about effective curriculum decisions and ultimately program improvement in the schools. The study is important because it will also highlight those decision

case is a factor external to the educational system like politics, policy, financial and material limitations, staffing, time and the physical environment.

Curriculum development is a practical enterprise whereby the materials and strategies which are supposed to achieve the outcomes projected in the curriculum plan are developed. This involves designing and developing curriculum and instructional materials, and creating conditions in which the curriculum and instructional materials will be used.

Curriculum Implementation "means simply putting the curriculum that is produced through curriculum development process into effect" (Zais, 1981). An important component of curriculum implementation is the provision for an appraisal or evaluation of the effectiveness of the curriculum. Curriculum implementation is an on-going process where evaluative feedback during development and implementation stages are utilized to give direction to curriculum activities, and/or to modify some implemented portions of the curriculum.

Curriculum Evaluation is "the process of delineating, obtaining and providing information for judging decision alternatives" (Guba and Stufflebeam, 1970).

System is defined here as a complex of interacting and interdependent processes serving a common purpose and constituting a unified whole. Education is seen as a

making processes that are not effective in planning for future school programs. It is hoped that this information will be helpful to those involved in curriculum decision making in the country. The study will also offer practical strategies for involving parents, teachers, and students in curriculum decision making. Parental and teacher participation in decision making is important because curriculum planners alone cannot accurately assess the needs of the learners and society.

Curriculum planning can only be effective if needs of all citizens are reflected in the curriculum, and if those involved in implementing the plans are initially involved in decision making. Involving parents in decision making, is important because they are among those who have a right to be consulted. Their opinions tend to spring from their own experience of schooling and its relations to their lives. Despite the lack of clarity of curriculum issues and subjectivity in opinion, the aspirations they maintain for their children have an authenticity that demands respect. Paulo Freire, suggested similar views when he referred to a dialogue between Mao Tse Tung and Malraux:

> In long conversation with Malraux, Mao Tse-Tung declared, "You know I've proclaimed for a long time: we must teach the masses clearly what we have received from them confusedly". This affirmation contains an entire dialogical theory of how to construct the program content of education, which cannot be elaborated according to what the educator thinks is best for his students (Freire, 1970:82).

Delimitations of the Study

The curriculum decision making process in Malawi does not only involve the Ministry of Education and Culture, but it is also part of the country's national development planning processes. Certain curriculum decisions, therefore, go beyond the Ministry. To put it the other way round, curriculum decision making at Ministry level may be constrained by national policies. The present study will, however, only concern itself with curriculum planning and decision making strategies at the Ministry of Education and Culture level.

It is not the purpose of this study to define the myriad ways in which teachers and parents and the community in general can participate in curriculum decision making. Rather, selected strategies for initial involvement will be developed as a take-off point for further defining specific roles and responsibilities. The latter can realistically be developed through deliberation by parents, teachers, and curriculum planners themselves.

Recommendations for specific curriculum decision making processes, are not the purpose of this study. What is envisioned is to bring about a crucial awareness to those currently involved in decision making, the potential for shared decision making.

Finally, the fact that the study will not focus beyond the Ministry of Education and Culture, will have possible

limitations on the interpretation of the findings. Yet to broaden the focus of the study, will bring in other limitations such as the lack of sufficient data to make sound generalizations.

Review of Literature

The review of literature will cover the following substantive areas:

1. Policy Making Processes and Strategies: Curriculum planning and decision making processes in a country is guided by policy. The review will shed light on how policy is made and its impact on decision making in general and curriculum decision making in particular.
2. Decision Making Processes: It is important to review the theoretical bases for decision making so as to be able to understand decision making processes in Malawi. In addition, the review of literature on decision making will offer possible directions for future curriculum decision making in the country.
3. The Relationship between Information, Communication and Dcision Making: Information, and the way it is communicated to people within an organization, is very important in any decision making process. In fact, the most common criterion for judging how centralized or decentralized a system is by analyzing how accessible information is, the type of communication network(s)

prevalent in the system, and the flow of information. An analysis of such variables sheds light on the quality and effectiveness of decisions and decision making processes.

4. Curriculum Planning Process: Curriculum planning models will be reviewed with emphasis on those models that use shared decision making as a basis for arriving at curriculum decisions.

5. Curriuculum Development and Implementation Process: Curriculum development and implementation strategies will be analyzed. The focus will be to demonstrate how teachers, parents, and the community at large, can effectively participate in curriculum decision making. The review of various models will consider those strategies that work better under decentralized settings.

6. Curriculum Evaluation: The rationale advanced here is that curriculum evaluation is important in any decision making process. Data obtained from such evaluation are considered the basis for judging the worth of educational programs and choosing between alternative solutions for program improvement.

7. Teacher, Student, and Parental Participation in Decision Making: Decentralizing curriculum decision making entails active participation of teachers, students, parents and the general public. The case for each of

these groups to participate in decision making is, argued in this section of the review.

8. Centralized and Decentralized Decision Making Systems: The review of centralized and decentralized systems is necessary because it will show strengths and weaknesses of such systems with a view to incorporate positive aspects in the process of curriculum planning and decision making in Malawi.

9. The study of curriculum planning and decision making cannot be made in a vacuum. Realizing the importance of studying such processes as they operate in practice, the last section of this review is to present selected country profiles with a view of analyzing their decision making practices as they operate under centralized or decentralized settings.

Chapter Outline

The dissertation consists of five chapters. Chapter I is an introduction to this study. This chapter is divided in two parts. The first part includes: the Statement of the Problem; Purpose of the Study; Definition of Terms, Significance of the Study; Delimitations of the Study, and a brief summary of the literature reviewed. The second part of chapter I, is a historical background to the educational system in Malawi. Chapter II, reviews relevant literature related to curriculum planning and decision

making. Chapter III, discusses the design of the study. This chapter includes the following sections: Sampling Procedures, Instruments and Procedures for Data Collection, and Data Analysis. Chapter IV, contains the presentation and analysis of the study's findings. Lastly, Chapter V, summarizes the study, discusses its implications and offers recommendations for the improvement of the decision making process. In addition, suggestions for further research are made. To provide a context for the research, a historical perspective of the education system in Malawi is advanced.

Historical Background of the Educational System in Malawi

Introduction

The history of formal western education in Malawi, is closely connected with the coming of the Missionaries. Although this study is mainly looking at curriculum planning and decision making processes at the secondary school level, nonetheless, an analysis of the historical context of educational planning and decision making in Malawi is imperative. The knowledge of educational planning and decision making in colonial and post-colonial Malawi, will provide some understanding and appreciation of the present organizational set up.

Education systems in Africa have taken models of their former colonial "masters". For example, in Malawi the education system has been shaped along the British model

because, the early missionaries who introduced formal education in the country were from Scotland and England. Also, when the country became a British Protectorate and when the latter took charge over educational policy in Nyasaland, they based it on the British model.

The acquisition of British educational forms and value system did not take place all of a sudden; it evolved slowly over time. So, one way of appreciating how this came about is to look at the country's past educational history. In this way not only is one going to appreciate the past, but more importantly, understand the present. The educational planning and decision making model in operation now has some elements reminiscent of the past. The study of the past also gives the reader hindsight when planning. The saying that "history repeats itself" should be taken seriously by all planners.

Traditional African Education in Malawi

> Long before the arrival in Africa of the first Europeans, there existed among all Bantu tribes puberty rites and ceremonies which included to a greater or leaser extent instruction to the initiates on their duties as members of the family or clan (Rep. Dept., 1932:5).

The above quotation emphasizes the fact that Africans had an education long before the coming of the missionaries and colonial administration in Africa. This education was basic; it aimed at passing to the young, norms and values

of the family, clan and ethnic group and equipped them with knowledge and skills to enable them to become self sufficient and active members of the society. This form of education took many forms. In the first place, there was an informal education which began from early childhood years, when the child learned from older members of the family many things through observation and imitation. As the child grew older, the elder members of the family and clan, narrated folk tales, real or imagined. Each folk tale had an educative message to the young. In fact, the rich cultural heritage of the tribe was transmitted orally through this medium.

Religion and moral ethics played an important part in the lives of the people. Instruction in this domain lay in the hands of the chiefs and tribal elders. While moral ethics could be taught to every member of the society when he or she came of age, religious rites were specialized. Elders from particular families or clans conducted these religious rites. These rites were passed to some members of the families. As a result, these rites were passed from one generation to the next and thus preserving Africa's cultural heritage.

The second type of education could be classified as non-formal in that the youths were introduced to practical subjects like hunting and fishing and, the arts and craft work. The acquisition of knowledge and skills in these

areas was necessary for the maintenance of the tribal economy and for the individual's self sufficiency. These skills were taught by those members of the tribe who demonstrated particular skills in the trade. Specialization by gender, was apparent in some of these occupations. For example, hunting and animal trapping was a male undertaking whereas, pottery was a female occupation. In addition, some of these skills were specialized along family lines. It was not therefore surprising to see a male child in one family learning his father's trade in leatherwork, for example. In fact parents encouraged a child who showed a special aptitude in one skill, to take it up as his or her adult occupation. For those families who had no special skills to teach their children, it was possible to 'apprentice' their children to skilled craftsmen in the area. Unlike in Feudal Europe where the apprenticeship system was formalized under the Guild system, it was not very formalized in traditional Africa.

The third type of education was a more formalized one: the initiation rites. Sex education was an integral part of the initiation rites. These rites marked a transition from puberty to adolescence, and adulthood for the growing youth. Other more specialized ceremonies were conducted during the course one's life cycle, for example, marriage rites for young women about to get married.

The reasons why initiation rites can be classified as formal is the fact that there was an instructor and other elders who conducted the initiation rites. Second, the ceremony was scheduled and there was a program to be followed. In other words, there was organization and structure in this type of traditional education. The difference, however, between the formalized western education and the traditional one, is the absence of a written curriculum, a 'classroom' and the fact that the latter was not continuous from level to level; it took place for a specific period of time of say three to six months in one's life time.

The classroom has always been a dominant feature in the western education system but this is not so in the traditional educational system. Most of the initiation rites were conducted in the bush outside the village with the exception of some of the specialized rites like marriage rites which were conducted in a village hut/compound.

Traditional education is still part of the African way of acquiring knowledge and skills. When one therefore talks about the beginning of formal education in Malawi, one should bear in mind that an education system existed in Malawi before the introduction of western forms of education, and that both exist side by side now. This co-existence has not been a happy one; western education has

education, and the reverse is also true.

The curriculum planner must be aware of the traditional cultural practices in society, understand the underlying conflicts between modern forms of education and traditional practice, in order to come up with decisions and programs of action which will synthesize the better aspects of each educational practice into a dynamic and relevant education system for the people.

The Beginning of Formal Education in Malawi

> The history of education is the history of the Missions - this is the central fact that must be borne in mind by the student of education in [Malawi] (Rept. Ed. Dept., 1935:5).

Until the year 1926, there was not Government Educational Department in Nyasaland. The government subsidized to a small extent the education carried on by missions and asked for statistical information every year. The organization and management of education, were left entirely to the missions.

Missionary activity in Malawi, was initiated by Dr. David Livingstone's Journeys to Central Africa, especially when he explored the area we now call Malawi. The spirited appeal of Dr. David Livingstone to the Universities of England, sparked off the enthusiasm for missionary enterprise and led immediately to the founding in 1860 of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA). The

enterprise and led immediately to the founding in 1860 of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA). The first expedition to Nyasaland under the leadership of Bishop Mackenzie in 1981 was not successful because of slave raiding, inter-tribal strife, and illness among the missionary staff.[1]

In 1874, the Free Church of Scotland founded the Livingstonia Mission which initially settled south of Lake Malawi at Cape Maclear. This site, however, proved unhealthy and so the missionaries moved northwards and opened up mission stations in Northern Nyasaland. In 1876, the Established Church of Scotland opened mission stations in Southern Nyasaland with its headquarters at Blantyre. Other missions followed; two major ones being the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (DRCM) and the Roman Catholic Church.

The Dutch Reformed Church Mission opened its headquarters at Nkhoma in 1889 after an unsuccessful attempt to settle at Mvera in Dowa district. Just like other missions, the DRCM established schools with a curriculum biased towards agriculture and vocational training. The Roman Catholic Order, the White Fathers, started evangelical work in the Upper Shire in 1889 but

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1. With the death of Bishop Mackenzie in 1862, his successor decided to abandon Nyasaland and moved to Zanzibar where the mission's headquarters was established.

owing to many difficulties withdrew to Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). Work was subsequently resumed in 1902 in the central parts of Nyasaland, and a station was opened at Chiwamba in Lilongwe in 1902. But in 1903 it was moved to Likuni (Rept. Ed. Dept., 1931). Other stations were opened in the same year at Mua in Dedza and Kachebere in Mchinji. The only station outside the central region was Nguludi in the south. This station was, however, taken over when Catholic Mission stations established in the southern part of Nyasaland formed the Apostolic Vicariate of Shire - Montfort Marist Fathers Mission. The Catholic Church now had two Orders: the White Fathers with their headquarters at Bembeke and the Marist Fathers at Nguludi.

Other smaller missions started work in Nyasaland in the late 1890's. They were the Zambezi Industrial Mission in Blantyre in 1892; the Baptist Industrial Mission of Scotland in Blantyre in 1895, Nyasa Mission (then known as the Nyasa Industrial Baptist Mission) in Blantyre in 1898; the South African General Mission in Nyasaland in the Lower Shire in 1900; the Providence Industrial Mission, the African Church of Christ Mission, the African Methodist Episcopal Church Mission and the Seventh Day Adventists' Mission.

Each mission, to a greater or lesser extent set itself to establish a system of village schools as prerequisite to the work of evangelization. From the outset, missionaries

realized that the village school was a powerful agency for "evangelizing [people] and for giving them rudiments of education" (Steytler, 1939:xvi). At first, the curriculum consisted only of Bible teaching and reading. Later on, the curriculum was expanded to include writing, Arithmetic, (thus completing the "4R's").[2] Gradually, other subjects were introduced into the curriculum such as Nature Study, Physical and Health Education, Geography, and History. Other more practical subjects were also introduced and emphasized in differing degrees in the various missions, namely; Carpentry and Bricklaying (for boys), and Cookery and Needlework (for girls).

Broadly speaking, the UMCA tended to emphasize evangelical and literary aspects of their teaching while the other two Scottish Missions favored an approach that enabled two streams to develop side by side; the one "industrial" or vocational, the other "literary" or academic (Macdonald, 1969). The DRCM de-emphasized the academic in favor of practical knowledge in health and hygiene and skills in Craftwork, Cookery, Carpentry, etc. (Steytler, 1939).

Practical work did not appeal to the pupils and their parents right from the beginning. Steytler, the DRCM's

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2. Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Religion.

Director of Education at Nkhoma Mission made this observation:

> Book learning has always had and still has a kind of hypnotic and rigid hold on the imagination of the people. Many people do not consider it decent for an educated man [sic] to soil his hand with work (Steytler, 1939; xvii.)

This attitude is still prevalent among some students and members of the general public even now.

In the early years, all the mission schools taught English as a subject and gradually used it as a medium of instruction in the senior classes except schools under the Dutch Reformed Church. The latter discouraged the use of English. Since English was and still is an important medium of instruction as well as communication in Anglophone countries this policy had an unfortunate result; the academic standards in schools run by the DRCM were comparatively poor.

The first serious attempts to harmonize the educational policies of the various missions was made at a conference at Livingstonia in 1900. Four missions were represented at this conference namely; the Livingstonia Mission, the Church of Scotland Mission, the Dutch Reformed Mission and the Zambezi Industrial Mission. Two of the points at issue concerned the content of the school curricula and the relationship between education and evangelization (Macdonald, 1969). The conference also raised the question of active government participation in

the education of the people it exercised political authority and, to a marked extent, economic and social control. On the curriculum issue, the conference recommended the creation of a common education code. The code was to become a guide for standardizing educational practice in all the different missions. This was the beginning of a centralized and uniform curriculum in the country.

In 1904, another conference was held at Blantyre. In addition to the four missions which attended the 1900 gathering, the South African General Mission and the Nyasaland Industrial Mission attended (Rept. Ed. rept., 1929). The most significant achievement of the Second United Missionary Conference was the decision taken to delegate responsibility to an education board for the drawing up of a common education code and general scheme of education for the protectorate. The first education code was published in 1905 under the aegis of the "Central Africa United Education Missionary Institutions". In 1908 the Government responded to the missions's request for financial assistance by contributing a sum of 1,000 pounds per annum as a Grants-in-Aid to the Mission's educational activities. This doubled to 2,000 pounds per annum in 1918.[3]

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3. The Grant-in-aid remained at this figure until in 1927 when it rose to 4,000 pounds per annum. From 1928 to 1930

In the year 1910, an education committee was formed and a new code was drawn up and published. In this year the missions referred themselves as the "Federated Missions". The outbreak of the First World War, hampered education progress in the country.

In 1924, the Phelps Stokes Commission visited Nyasaland. The Commission emphasized the improvement of conditions of the people at grassroot level. The report also noted the seeming lack of communication between Missions, Government and Commercial concerns, and the relative non-participation of Africans in policy planning generally. The point was stressed once again that education must be adapted to the needs of the people. This criticism was directed at the missionaries who at this point in time defined what was to be included in the curriculum. The government was taken to task in the area of organization and supervision. The committee noted that many of the failures of the education system in the past had been due to lack of organization and supervision. In the same year another commission, the East African Parliamentary Commission visited Nyasaland and their report also recommended a policy of cooperation between government and missions in Education.

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it was around 7,000 pounds, and from 1936 to 1939, it varied between 10,000 and 11,000 pounds per annum. In 1940, it rose to 14,000; 17,000 pounds in 1941; 20,000 pounds in 1943 and 24,000 in 1944.

The outcome of these commissions in British ruled African dependencies was the presentation at the British parliament, the "Memorandum by the Advisory Committee on Native Education in the British Tropical Dependencies" in 1925. As a result of this memorandum, a government Education Department was established in Nyasaland in 1926. An education ordinance was drafted and presented to the Nyasaland Legislative Council in the same year. It was discussed in May 1927 at the first education conference attended by all mission and government representatives. This legislation provided generally for:

> (a) The conditions on which school could be maintained and the curricula to be followed.
> (b) The Inspection of Schools.
> (c) The Government certification, and examination of African teachers.
> (d) A system of grants-in-aid based upon the number of qualified teachers and instructors, Europeans and Africans, employed in schools; the maintenance of boarders in certain types of schools; building and equipment grants, etc. as money was available (Rept. Ed. Dept., 1932:6).

Under the ordinance, an Advisory Board in Education was created. This board was supposed to advise the government on education matters. The Board comprised of representatives of the Missions, the European commercial community and the government. District committees,

similarly composed were also formed to advise on local matters. However, some of the provisions of the ordinance were prematurely implemented and indeed impracticable. The mission's main objection was the ordinance's postulation as a sine qua non in all schools, a "standard of efficiency considerably higher than that existing generally". The revenues of the protectorate were inadequate to provide for such assistance and it became obvious that, if the ordinance was strictly enforced, the majority of existing schools would have to be closed (Rept. Ed. Dept. 1935).

Two conferences were held in 1928 and between 1928 and 1929 to thrash out educational policy between the local missions, their home councils and the government. A new education ordinance was finally drawn in 1930 and enacted in January, 1931. Under it, the government retained the right to inspect all schools and to close any "conducted in a manner which is not in the interest of the community" and to prohibit the opening of a new school which might militate against the attendance at an existing school which received grants from the government. The ordinance did not attempt to control education, but only controlled spending of public money on education.

Throughout the 1930's up to the mid-forties, education was administered under this ordinance. The decision making process and control of education in Nyasaland was centralized. In fact this centralization can be seen as

operating at two levels: the British Empire level and the Colony or Protectorate level (Figure 1.1). At the former level, the curriculum decisions, were recommended by the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies in London to the Secretary of State for Colonies. The Director of Education in the respective British dependencies were guided by these policy directives. That is why, for

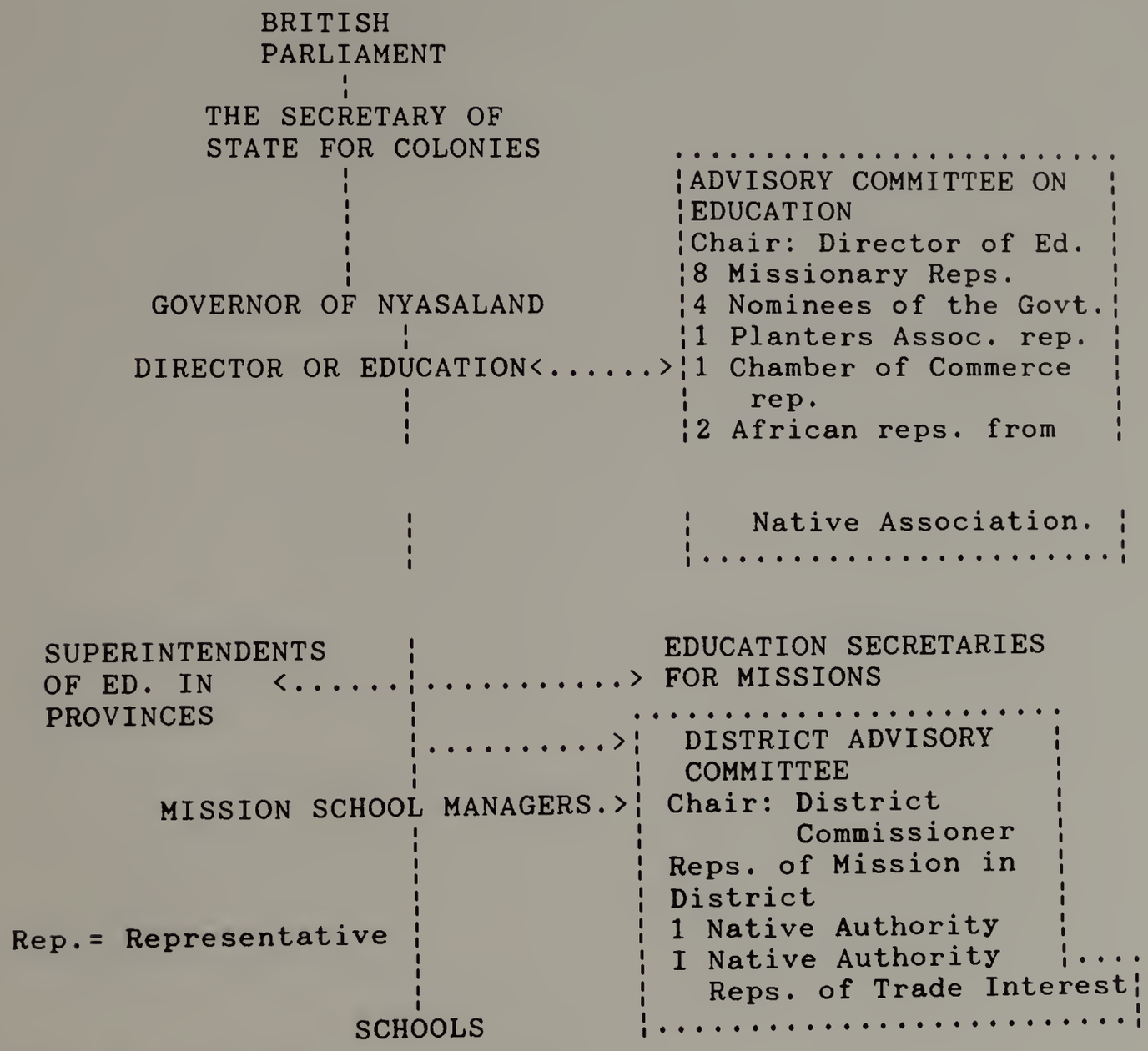

Figure 1.1: Decision making Structure of the Education System in Nyasaland in the 1930's.

(Adapted from Steytler, 1939).

example, the school curricula in science and English in Anglophone East and Central Africa, were similar. Of course, there were local country variations. These came about because at the colony (country) level, the Director of Education was advised on curricula and other education issues by the Advisory Committee on Education and special commissions which visited the individual colonies from time to time. The variations in curricula between Kenya, Nyasaland and Uganda, for example, were attributed because of this.

With the coming into force of the common education code in 1905 referred to earlier in this study, the school curriculum in Nyasaland was more or less uniform in all public schools. Any local variation in curricula could be attributed to two factors. First, although the different missions in Nyasaland followed the common education code, each developed a curriculum which was in line with its overall mission's purpose. Second, in Nyasaland, schools were classified according to race, for example, European, Asian, Euro-African (Colored) and African. The type of curricula and quality of schooling offered, therefore differed with the European schools getting the best education and the African schools the least.

resolutions and recommendations passed at these meetings, would be taken up by the Advisory Committee on Education or presented to the Director through the existing administrative hierarchy. In reality, this was not the case. A disproportionate amount of time was spent on considering applications for new village schools (Macdonald, 1969).

African efforts towards education advancement during the inter-war period was significant. It was clear to most of the leaders that education was one of vehicles which would free them from colonial bondage. The government had a poor track record in advancing the Africans socio-economically and politically, and Africans were extremely unhappy with this state of affairs. One of the manifestations of this resentment was the Chilembwe Rising of 1915, although in Chilembwe's litany of grievances, education only played a minor role. Regional voluntary organizations like the North Nyasa, Mombera, Western Nyasa and Southern Nyasa (Nyasaland) Native Associations, played an important role demanding better education conditions for the Africans.

In 1920, the North Nyasa Native Association (NNNA) passed a resolution placing the onus upon the government to increase the size of its educational grants to missions as a means of expanding existing educational

facilities (Macdonald, 1969). The Phelps Stokes Commission of 1924, and the presence in this commission of Dr. Aggrey, a distinguished educator from Ghana, stimulated African efforts to gain improved educational opportunities. The Nyasaland Native Association meeting in May 1924, was attended by Dr. Aggrey. At this meeting, the Association presented petitions to government addressing education issues. Levi Mumba, a prominent member of the NNNA played an important role in the promotion of African education when he became the first African member on the Advisory Committee on Education in 1933. He used the committee as a platform for speaking in favor of the establishment of government schools and for increased facilities for primary and higher education.

Formative Years of Secondary Education in Malawi

It took over sixty years since the establishment of primary education by the first Missions and fifty years since the declaration of Nyasaland as a British Protectorate (1891) for secondary education to be introduced in the country. When compared with her other East African neighbors, Nyasaland (and Northern Rhodesia) lagged behind. Uganda, for example, had secondary education well before the First World War, while Kenya and Tanganyika established secondary institutions in the early

twenties and thirties respectively (Macdonald, 1969). The major reason for this delay was financial: the government was reluctant to increase its financial contribution to education. The recurrent financial contribution to education could not allow for the establishment of secondary education unless there were cutbacks in its grants to primary education. Both the government and the missions were not prepared for such a financial reduction in elementary education.

The demand for secondary education become pronounced during the thirties. In fact, from education standpoint, the thirties can be described as the 'years of muted discussions on secondary education'.

At the first session of the Nyasaland Advisory Committee on Education in June 1930, both the government and the missions recognized the urgent need for the provision of secondary education. The committee, however, qualified the statement by stating that supreme need lay in the:

> "development and increasing support of African elementary education and consequently, of teacher training throughout the country" (Min. Adv. Comm. 1930, No.I p.5 in Macdonald, 1969:410).

Between 1931 and 1934 discussions concerning the establishment of secondary education continued without concrete results. In 1935, the Advisory Committee on Education in its annual meeting again considered on its

agenda secondary education for Africans. In his opening address, Governor Kittermaster made the following remarks:

> I must make some reference to Secondary Education for Africans...Africans who aspire to the goal...must realize that it is a long and difficult path to travel and must be prepared to face it with determination the effort and sacrifices which it will entail (Rept. Ed. Dept., 1935:340).

The governor's remarks were cautious and at the same time paternalistic. He did not set a positive direction to the discussion of this issue. The committee's resolution was, however, in sympathy with the proposal for secondary education and felt that the only constraint was finance. It, therefore, urged the government to consider increasing the Education Department's vote so that some of this increase could go towards secondary education. The Committee in its annual meeting in 1936, again resolved to take the issue to government to consider the relevant urgency of expenditure on secondary education. The governor's response was not encouraging as evidenced from an extract of his address below:

> The question of secondary education of Africans is again on the Agenda of this meeting. I approach the subject with caution. It does not appear at present as if numbers who could really benefit from secondary education are sufficiently large to justify the establishment of even one secondary school (Rept. Ed. Dept., 1936:38).

The argument about the numbers who could benefit from secondary education is not convincing from a social demand

point of view. Lacey, the Director of Education did not agree with the Governor's view point. In 1935, for example, Lacey argued the case for the inauguration of secondary education on social grounds (Macdonald, 1969). Second, from a manpower demand approach, the administrative and social service structure in the government was expanding and so was the commercial sector, to justify post primary education in the protectorate.

Despite the lack of support from the governor, the Advisory Committee viewed the secondary education issue with more urgency, and appealed to the Secretary of State for a special and separate grant to allow for the introduction of a higher education project on a very small scale. The De la Warr Commission[4] on Higher Education in East Africa, assisted considerably in determining the government's support for the inauguration of secondary education. Referring to this subject in the Legislative Council in Zomba in November, 1937, the Governor said:

> The publication of this report is an event of enormous importance for the Protectorate. We must carry out the principles laid down in the Makerere Report while continuing to avoid the danger of allowing the supply to exceed the demand. I propose that before the next estimates are presented, a considered scheme of secondary education for Africans shall be drawn up (Rept., Ed. Dept., 1937:12).

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4. The De la Warr Commission's report was also known as the Makerere Report.

Some years elapsed before the first secondary school opened its doors. This delay may be attributed to shortage of funds and to a rather drawn out discussion over ways and means by which the initial schools would be administered. The Department of Education and the Missions, finally submitted proposals on secondary education to the Secretary of State. In the proposal, the Church of Scotland (Blantyre Mission) was to establish a Junior Secondary School which was to be supported by all missions except the two orders of the Catholic Church. Another Junior Secondary School was to be established by the Catholic Church in 1940 or 1941. In both projects, the government would provide capital expenditure (Rept. Ed. Dept. 1938).

The outbreak of the Second World War delayed the implementation of the two projects. The first secondary school was opened in Blantyre in 1940 with Mr. G.T. Pike of Livingstonia Mission as its Principal. The Catholic Secondary School was formally open on 28th October, 1942 in Zomba.

The expansion of secondary education between Post-War period and Independence was slow. By 1956 there were eleven secondary schools with an enrollment of about 600 (Rept. Ed. Dept., 1949:5; Dev. Plan., 1956/7). The control of Grant-Aided-Secondary school was in the hands of Board of Governors; assisted schools were controlled by the

proprietors and Government secondary schools were administered directly by the Department of Education.

Educational Planning and Control in Malawi During The Post-War Period

Until 1945, there was no long term educational planning. The yearly budget statements constituted the direction of activities that the education department was to undertake during the year. After 1945, the government started drawing five year plans. The main factor which constrained the planners was finance. The meeting of educational needs of the country were restricted to the availability of money. Instead of drawing up a dynamic plan articulating the existing and future needs of the country, the colonial planners considered money available first and then proceeded to produce a plan according to the resources available. As a result, their plans were shortsighted and static. Another weakness of these plans was that they were worked out in London by the Colonial Office's Advisory Committee for Education with little local participation. This is not surprising, because as we noted earlier on, the system had a two-tier decision making process (Figure 1). In addition, the territorial plans were drawn up for the protectorate as a whole and as such did not include the machinery for attainment in individual

administrative districts, the targets laid down in the territorial plan.[5]

Education progress during the 1930's was slow because the government had very little control over education. The 1930 Education Ordinance did not give the government powers to control education, but only to control the spending of public money. As a result, its financial commitment to education was small. In order to give the government control over education and to boost the development of education in the country, a new Education Ordinance was enacted in 1945. This Ordinance gave:

> "...statutory recognition to the establishment and constitution of committees on African, European, Asian and Euro-African [Colored] education and for District committees. It made provision for the establishment of Government schools and the payment of grants to non-government schools (Rept. Ed. Dept.; 1949:3).

The First Educational Plan (1945-49) did not accomplish much in the field of secondary education although the post-war development phase was directed toward upward rather outward growth. No new secondary school opened during this period, and secondary enrollment remained at 140 (Rept. Ed. Dept., 1949:5). The Second Year Plan (1950-54), was among other things, designed to achieve a general all round increase of efficiency in education.

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5. This criticism has also been levelled at the 1985-95 Educational Plan in the 1988 Education Services Report.

The government was going to assume "its proper part in the education system by maintaining sufficient trained staff, perform its role of guidance and control, establish schools of its own at the secondary and teacher training levels (Rept. Ed. Dept., 1949). The plan made provision to undertake an educational survey of all grant-aided and selected unaided schools prior to the implementation of the plan. This was a very wise move because data from this survey would form the basis for decision making, and the assessment of the outcomes of the plan. The object of the educational survey was to work out for each individual district how many objectives would reasonably be expected to be achieved in each of the five years. A meritable characteristic of this plan was its decentralized and 'grassroot' approach. Meetings of interested Africans were held at each school in order to give everybody concerned the fullest information about the implications of the plan.[6] The implementation of the Second Year Plan was, however, affected by finance and the politics of the day which were dominated by the Federation issue.

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6. It is lamentable to note that Education Plans in post-independent Ma alwi have not conducted extensive surveys and held meetings at grassrot level to discuss certain aspects of the plan prior to implementation.

The Third Year Education Plan was launched in 1954. This plan was not well formulated. There were discontinuities in terms of overall objectives with the preceding plan, and it was not clear whether the plan aimed at meeting social or manpower needs of the country. African members of the Legislative Council strongly criticized the plan and demanded that it reflect a more favorable planned African educational development. It is, therefore, not surprising that by the end of 1956, a new plan titled "A Plan for Educational Development (1957-61)" became necessary. This, as Lamba (1986) put it "constitute[d] an admission of the absence of appreciable foresighted planning".

Until 1959, the Education Department was virtually part of the Secretariat with tenuous link with the Executive Council through the Secretary for African Affairs. The Departmental Staff at Head Office consisted of a Director, his Deputy, and a Senior Woman Education Officer (later Assistant Director). At the Provincial level, there was one Educational Officer charged with the care of girls education. A staff of African Inspectors was controlled by Provincial Education Officers (Figure 1.2). The government was aware that the system was rather too centralized and "proposals for greater decentralization [were] accepted as government policy but had to await new

legislation before being fully implemented" (Phillips Report, 1962:26).[7]

The organization of the education system changed with the creation of the Ministry of Education in August, 1961. At the top of the hierarchy was the Minister of Education. The Minister was responsible for negotiations with the treasury over funds required for current and capital expenditure. The administration of the educational system and its development programs was also the responsibility of the Minister through the Secretary for Education (Permanent Secretary). The Secretary for Education was the Minister's advisor on matters concerning education in the country. With the guidance of the advisory committee on African Education, he assisted the Minister in the formulation of educational policy (Phillips Report, 1962). Administratively, the Secretary for Education had immediate responsibility over primary, secondary, technical education, and teacher training (Figure 1.3)

Just like its predecessor, the Department of Education, the whole system was centralized except at the primary level where the Secretary partially delegated authority to Provincial Officers and through them to

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7. It is very doubtful if greater decentralization was ever carried by the government, before and after independence. The education system is centralized now as it was twenty-five or so years ago. However, they are plans in the pipeline to decentralize the system. This issue will be taken up later in the study.

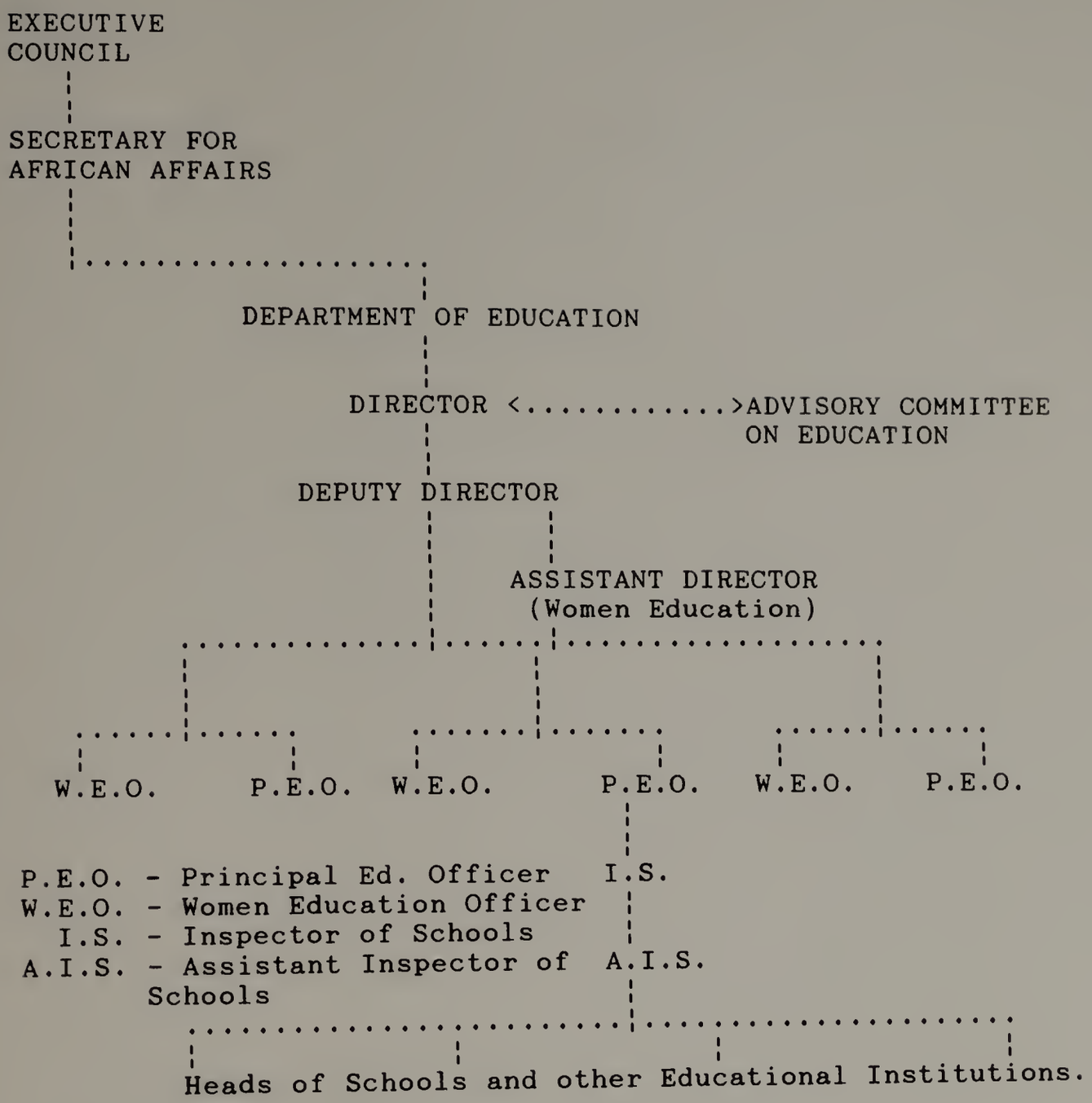

Figure 1.2: The Administrative Structure of the Department of Education in the 1950's.

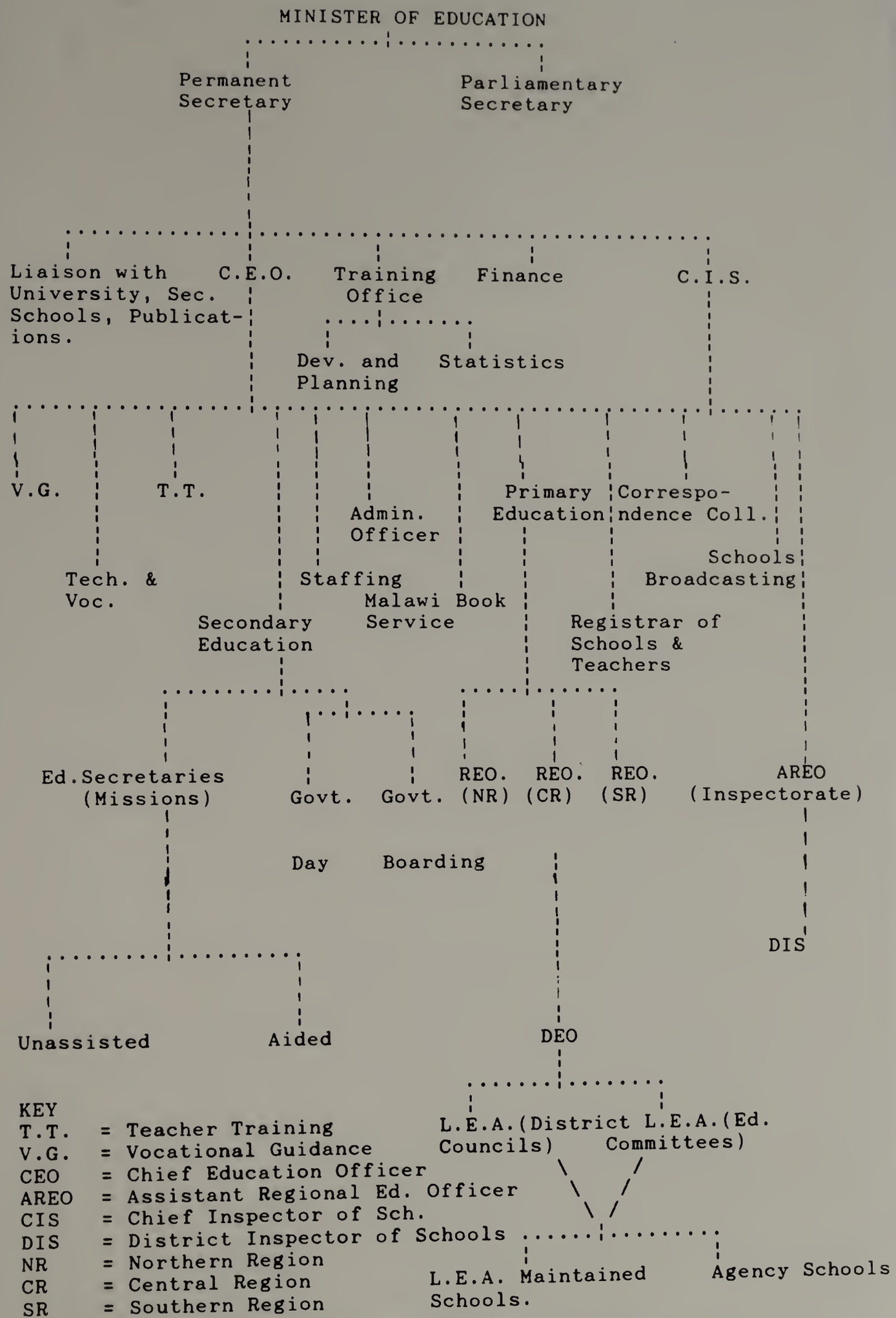

Figure 1.3: The Organizational and Administrative Structure of the Ministry of Education in 1962.

District and Assistant District Officers. The Secondary level remained under direct control of the Head office because it was still small. The same also applied to technical education and teacher training.

Although Malawians dominated in the decision-making process as early as 1961, foreign advisors played a significant role in shaping the education policy of emergent independent Malawi. This advice of course came from the Secretary of Education who was an expatriate[8] and committees of inquiry which were commissioned to look into educational issues. In 1961, for example, continued African complaints led to the formation of the Committee of Inquiry into African Education under Phillips. Two of the important problems identified by the report for immediate attention were the low standards of education at all levels and the insufficient funds devoted to education. Some of the factors attributed to the low standards of education at secondary level in the country were: shortage of teachers, lack of proper system of inspection of schools, and poor delivery of curriculum content.

The Phillips Report made a number of recommendations to rectify the situation. On teacher shortage, it urged

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8. The first senior Malawian civil servants were apointed in 1967, three years after independence.

the government to undertake a recruitment drive to obtain expatriate graduate teachers and to make available money for teacher training abroad. On inspection, the report recommended a system of regular inspection by a panel of qualified specialists in the various subjects headed by the Chief Inspector of Schools. School visits by the inspectors were to render advice and guidance on every aspect of the school's organization and activities. The report criticized the relationship between the Inspectorate and the Ministry by saying that it:

> retain[ed]... the grave defects of the Education Department in which the Inspectorate was an integral part of the machine for whose efficiency working it was responsible (Phillips Report, 1962:109).[9]

The committee wanted to see the Inspectorate as a self-contained entity within the framework of the Ministry. On curriculum, the report emphasized the proper teaching of English, both spoken and written, and English literature. They reiterated the Central African Study Group's (1952) recommendation that well managed agricultural work should be intelligently linked with to some part of the academic work of the school since the country had an agricultural economic base. The report also recommended the setting up

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9. It looks like the committee had in mind an Inspectorate akin to the British system where Her Majesty's Inspectorate operated independently of Department of Education.

of Subject Panels to examine School Certificate Syllabi and to recommend to the Cambridge Examination Syndicate adaptations or alternative syllabi which the panel deemed necessary.[10]

All in all, the Phillips Report represented a very important and ambitious document in terms of its findings and recommendations. The report reflected the educational needs of an African government so much so that it served as the education plan to guide the new Ministry of Education. However, the report did not have a clear plan of action to implement the recommendations. The Ministry of Education still needed a proper plan to guide its operations and expand more systematically.

Another document which influenced the direction of education in Malawi after independence was the Johnson Report (1964).[11] The Johnson Report made a number of observations about the status of the education sector by 1964, and recommended to government measures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. For the

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10. This was agood recommendation because up till now, the scondary school curriculum did not reflect the physical, socio-economic, and cultural realities of the country in its content.

11. Known in full as: Education for Development: Report of of the Survey of Education in Malawi, American Council of Education, USAID, April, 1964.

purpose of this study, issues on secondary education will be considered.

The Johnson Report, concerned with the number of places for secondary education in the country, and realizing that secondary education formed the basis for manpower development in the country, recommended to the Ministry to give the highest priority to the expansion and staffing of secondary education. It set an ambitious goal of increasing progressively the proportion of primary school leavers attending secondary school at 15% by 1980. On staffing it recommended an accelerated output of secondary school teachers with a view to complete the Africanization of staff. Like the Phillips report, it called for the recruitment from the Peace Corps, the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and other expatriate sources as an interim measure to solve the teacher shortage. On quality and equity, the report recommended to the government to pursue from the beginning, a policy striving to assure equal or comparable educational opportunities at all secondary schools" in terms of curriculum, equipment, teachers' amenities, grounds, staff, and prestige, whether existing or new schools, day or boarding schools" (Johnson, Report, 1964:66). It further stated that:

> ...what qualitative differences come to exist should be for reasons unrelated to day school or boarding school (Johnson Report, 1964:23)[12]

As the system was still using the Cambridge School Certificate Examinations set in the UK, it recommended the setting up of a new examination system, with a separate examination branch in the Ministry. It suggested the West African Examination Council as a model to emulate.

On curriculum, the report felt the need for the curriculum to be radically reoriented. It noted that the classical type of academic education found in traditional Grammar Secondary School as inappropriate for Malawi. It recommended a revitalized and comprehensive curriculum where the traditional vied with the practical and technical. Specifically, the Johnson Report wanted a curriculum with a variety of subject options, among them technical and commercial education to be placed on an equal footing with academic education. The curriculum in general was to be relevant to the world of work, as well as preparing the individual for advanced study. Commenting on the dynamic nature of change, the report stated that:

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12. When looked at retrospectively, there have been and still exist qualitative differences related to these types of schools. These have come about because of the kind of support, financial and otherwise, Day and Boarding schools receive. Boarding schools, for example, are well equipped and staffed than Day Schools. The IDA Project is currently

> Curricular adaptation also calls for continuous scrutiny. Change begets change. Manpower needs change. The roles of girls and women change. Urban and rural relationships change. Citizenship demands change. National and personal expectations change. The bounds of the possible change. Education must be flexible and dynamic. It is important therefore, as with primary education, that the secondary curriculum and techniques of teaching be made special object of scrutiny, experimentation and evaluation by competent personnel (Johnson Report, 1964:25).

The creation of the Malawi Certificate Examination and Testing Board and the reorganization of the Inspectorate in the Ministry which led to the establishment of a separate examination section for primary and Junior Certificate Examination, created an opportunity for curriculum reforms to take place. More Malawian educationalists actively participated in this change process as members of various subject committees for Junior Certificate and Malawi School Certificate levels.

The Johnson Report significantly influenced and guided educational planning in Malawi up to 1973. Between 1965 and 1972, some of the Johnson Report recommendations had been implemented. But with the fast economic growth registered during this period, there was more need for the government to respond to new socio-economic trends systematically. A properly formulated education plan was therefore needed to guide the system. In 1973, the

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upgrading 'old' Day Schools throughout the country. And as for those schools that have already undergone this renewal, student achievement has relatively improved.

government launched its First Education Plan. This study will, however, focus more on the secondary education aspect of the plan.

The Education Plan of Malawi (1973-80)

The Seven year Education Plan of Malawi (1973-80) was an integral part of overall development policies of the country. This is so because the government saw the education sector, with its role of supplying manpower needs for the country, as an important vehicle for socio-economic development. The thrust towards the training of skilled manpower came as a result of the skilled manpower constrain that the country was facing and which was later revealed by the Manpower Survey conducted in 1971. The Statement of Development Policies (1971-80) were designed to enable to direct the country to achieve the rapid rate of agriculture-based development set in the national development plan for the 1970-80 decade. The policies can be divided broadly into two major groups:

> supply policies which consists of ways in which education and training (in the broad sense) can be improved and made more relevant to manpower needs; and utilization policies which seek to ensure that the most productive use is made of all resources of manpower that are available (Dev. Pol., 1971-80:90).

The education sector was obviously going to implement the manpower supply policies - those involving the

processes of education and training. Two main features were to be addressed in order to improve manpower supply: the external and internal efficiency of the education system. The internal efficiency refers:

> the extent to which resources committed to education are used in educationally and economically efficient ways...and external efficiency is generally, the extent to which education and training policies are related to the demands made to them by the rest of the economy (Dev. Pol., 1971-80:90-91).[13]

However, because the inputs, processes and outputs of the education system are mutually interrelated, it is not easy to analyze the external and internal efficiency variables independent of each other in order to measure the overall efficiency of the system. They are certain basic factors which are always at work in influencing the efficiency of the education system.[14]

The government wanted to have an efficient educational system in order to realize its national development objectives. These were:

(a) to improve agricultural productivity and provide

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13. The indices for analyzing internal efficiency are: enrolment ratios, repeater rate, promotion or progression rate, survival rate, wastage rate, and retention rate. The external efficiency index is not easily amenable to quantification but is, nevertheless, reflected in the skilled and educational manpower inbalance in the country (Education Plan of Malawi, 1973-80).

14. The 1973-80 Education Plan cited the most important as being entry age, the curricula, teacher input,

the infrastructure required to attain this improvement;

(b) to raise the living standards of the rural population;

(c) to achieve better balanced regional development;

(d) to ensure greater Malawian participation in the private sector (Dev. Pol., 1971-80).

The Ministry of Education in response to the above development objectives, set to achieve the following goals in the 1973-80 Education Plan:

(a) to base educational development and in particular post primary education on the needs of the country;

(b) to develop curricula with greater relevance to socio-economic and environment and environmental needs;

(c) to ensure efficient utilization of existing facilities and resources;

(d) to achieve a more equitable distribution of educational facilities and resources, and

(e) further development of the Sixth form level (Education Plan, 1973-80).

In the primary education sector, this period witnessed a raising for the national enrollment form 33.5 per cent to 50 per cent by 1980. This was a remarkable

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organizational structure, supply, salary structure, classroom adequacy, location of schools, nutritional and health problems, economic use of children, school fees, and cultural values.

achievement indeed in view of the fact that the country inherited and educational system ill equipped to meet the post-independent demand for primary school education. skilled and educational manpower inbalances in the country Government policy of self help in the expansion of primary schools helped in meeting the high demand of education. In fact, this demand cannot only be explained by people's rising expectations after independence, but also because of the Malawi Congress Party's deliberate political campaign and exhortation for parents to send their children to school. The government could have achieved a higher enrollment rate had it not been for a high drop-out rate.

The rising primary school enrollment created other problems which contributed to the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. Two of these problems were shortage of teachers and lack of secondary school places for thousands of primary school leavers. In the case of teacher shortage, the plan underestimated the staffing requirements for such a rapidly expanding primary school sector. As a matter of fact, even if the projected requirements were correct, they would not have been met. The reason for this is that primary education, under the self-help strategy, was developing on a social demand plane, where as, the overall educational strategy under this plan was using a manpower approach to planning. As a result, the control of primary school expansion was

difficult. It was also politically sensitive for the system to put a limit to the number of schools being built or the number of classrooms being added to existing schools in the country side.

In addition, since the 1961 Addis Ababa Conference put an unrealistic Universal Primary Education target for all African countries by 1980, any policy restricting primary education expansion would have been seen by the outside world as retrogressive. So, here was a situation where teacher requirements were supposed to be projected based on the number of students when the rate of increase in enrollment could not be effectively controlled. The government tried to solve this problem by employing temporary (unqualified) teachers. This was meant to be a stop-gap measure; the real solution lay in the building of more Teacher Training Colleges and the expansion of the enrollment capacity of the existing ones.

Secondary education was considered the most critical bottleneck in the development and accumulation of high level manpower. The government paid particular attention to the development of this sector. As at 1972/73 only about 16% out of those passing primary school level certificate examination entered secondary school. According to the Johnson Report, secondary enrollment was projected to increase to 40,000 from an enrollment of 5,951

in 1964/65 school year (Figure 1.4). This was an over projected increase and the report did not explain the strategies of realizing this enrollment. The 1973-80 Education Plan's projected increase was however modest. It projected an enrollment 18,006 from 12,248 in 1973/74. This presented a projected increase of 47% (Fig.4). Through the International Development Agency's financial assistance, the Ministry realized its target enrollment. However, this did not satisfy the demand for secondary education. To satisfy this demand, the government encouraged primary school leavers to enrol with

YEAR	ACTUAL ENROL.	PROJECTED ENROL. AND % GROWTH		ACTUAL ENROL. BY 1980	% GROWTH	
		JOHNSON REPORT	1973-80 ED. PLAN		JOHNSON REPORT	1973-80 PLAN
1964	5,951	40,000 (572%)	-	18,006	45%	-
1973/4	12,248		18,006 (47%)	18,006		100%

Figure 1.4: Comparison of Projected and Actual Enrollment of Secondary School Students.

Source: Educational Statistical, Ministry of Education, 1985; Education Plan, 1973-80; Johnson Report, 1964; Educational Statistics, 1987).

the Malawi Correspondence College Centers (now known as Malawi College for Distance Education Centers) and Night Secondary Schools. This alternative route to secondary education continues to ease off pressure for enrollment at 'normal' secondary schools.

Unlike the Johnson Plan, the 1973-80 Education Plan did not emphasize post-secondary development. Developments of higher education followed some of the recommendations in the Johnson Report (Appendix A). However, the education plan proposed to establish a Sixth form at the old Chancellor College campus at Chichiri, Blantyre. Interestingly, this proposal ran counter to the Johnson Report's recommendation to abolish the Sixth form as soon as a University was established in the country. The aim behind the Sixth form was to prepare young Malawians for higher degrees in medicine, architecture, engineering and veterinary sciences. In fact, not all successful high school students were guaranteed these scholarships. This resulted in frustration on their part. Some of them joined the work force and in some cases, with a starting salary like the school certificate employees. Others applied to join the University.

In other areas of qualitative improvement, the Education Plan reiterated what the Johnson Report had recommended. On curriculum, the plan called for more

reforms. It is noted that the curriculum was examination oriented and was therefore unresponsive to the requirement of the majority of school leavers who inevitably would have to make their livelihood in the rural economy. The plan stated that it was not advisable to attempt a two-phase restructuring of the system to satisfy demand for further education and higher education as this would have an implicit imposition of student's future life pattern. Ability was to be the basis for a student's choice and acceptance to a career. One way of meeting the students needs as well as that of the nation was the inclusion of more relevant courses in the curriculum. While noting that curricula review was well on the way, it recommended a gradual approach to the implementation of the reforms. Constraints like textbook preparation, retraining of teachers and the resistance to be overcome, justified this gradualist approach.

In order to carry out systematic and effective curriculum renewal, there was need for the government to set an autonomous body to co-ordinate the activities of curriculum development. The report did not mention how these reforms were to be organized and managed. The arrangement was that the Inspectorate in collaboration with the then Malawi Certificate Examination and Testing Board would look into the issue of secondary curriculum renewal. The problem with this kind of arrangement was two fold:

(a) The Inspectorate was under staffed and inspection, coupled with curriculum development duties would over stretch their capacity to perform either function well.[15]

(b) The MCE and Testing Board's emphasis was on examinations and aptitude testing; curriculum development was not emphasized. Evidence of this can be seen in the way the Board was organized; there was no separate curriculum development section and no curriculum specialists on the staff.

Another area of improving the quality of the schools was to look at the conditions and service of teachers. In this respect, the plan recommended the revision of the salary structure in order to attract and retain good and well qualified teachers. Internal efficiency factors like repetition and low student retention rates were also

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15. It was cited in the 1973-80 Education Plan that a significant number of schools visited throughout the country reported not to have seen an inspector up to twelve months. This, the report suggested, was due to the fact that either the inspectorate was understaffed or did not have adequate operational financial resources. The researcher is of the opinion that both factors explain this inadequate inspection/supervision.

addressed. At the secondary level, for example, the percentage for repeaters in Form 2 was 27% and that for re-entrants and repeaters in Form 4 was 20% (Education Plan, 1973-80:161). This was not satisfactory and needed to be redressed.

In its quest to improve the system the plan also envisaged the establishment of an Institute of education. The proposal for an Institute of Education had a history of discussion dating back to 1967. The Plan spelt out three basic functions of the institute:

(a) as a center of <u>educational investigation and research</u> into all aspects of education in general and more specifically to the education system in Malawi;

(b) as a center for in-service training, upgrading and professional renewal of serving teachers;

(c) as a supervising and moderating agency for the professional training of all teachers (Education Plan, 1973-80:153).

As can be seen from the above functions, curriculum development was not spelt out. It was, however, included when finally the Institute became a reality in 1980. According to the Education Order of 1979:

> The duties of the Board shall be to ensure that the Institute:
>
> (a) assists in the training of teachers;
>
> (b) provides professional help and services for teachers;
>
> (c) undertakes, encourages and coordinates curriculum

development, evaluation, and research activities; and

(d) arranges for the publication and production of teaching materials (Education Act; Cap.30:01, p.103-4, 17th August, 1979).

The impression one gets by reading the above objectives is that the Malawi Institute of Education takes care of all aspects of in-service education, curriculum development and research for the entire Ministry. This, however, is not the case. Since its inception to date, the Institute has performed these functions at the Primary and Teacher Training levels only. As stated earlier, curriculum development for secondary education is performed by the Inspectorate in collaboration with the Malawi National Examination Board.[16] In-servicing and upgrading of secondary school teachers is performed by the Faculty of Education at Chancellor College. The area of secondary education research is at the moment conducted by the Malawi National Examinations Board, the Faculty of Education, and the Research Unit at the Planning Section of the Ministry.

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16. In 1988, the Board's Act was ammended to give it statutory responsibility over Primary and Junior Certificate, and Teacher Training College examinations, over and above the Malawi School Certificate examinations. It was also given the responsibility for secondary school curriculum development.

The arrangement mentioned above leaves a lot to be desired, and this study will return to these issue later.

It is difficult to fully evaluate the achievement of the 1973-80 Plan because one would need to have quantitative data and qualitative information of the achievement that took place between 1964/65 and 1971/72, the period which was guided by the recommendations of the Johnson Report. It is only when one has information about the status of educational development by 1971/72 that one can really appreciate how successful the Plan was. The same difficulty is also applicable when one wants to evaluate the three education plans in pre-independence Malawi. We can, however, make a cautious conclusion that, in the Secondary sector, the implementation of the 1973-80 Education Plan made some commendable progress in increasing enrollment in secondary schools by 47% and in striving to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

The analysis of the Education Plans during the colonial era and the First Education Plan in independent Malawi, has revealed that the goals of the plans were overstated in certain areas and understated in other areas. Second, the objectives of the plan were not reduced to specifics so as to guide those implementing the plan. Third, except for the 1954-59 Plan, there was no attempt to involve the general public and practicing teachers in the planning process. This is a typical criticism levelled at

centralized decision making institutions. Fourth, the plan was not given wide publicity; some of the practicing teachers did not know much about the details of the plan. This situation is quite undesirable because those involved in implementing some aspects of the plan ought to know the objectives and targets of the plan. Finally, no comprehensive summative evaluation was undertaken to take stock of the achievements with a view to guiding future directions of educational development and improvement.

It has to be understood, however, that not all what is included in a plan can be implemented because the planner cannot predict accurately the conditions, over time, under which the plan will be implemented for the goals to be achieved. A plan, is in any case an 'ideal' and as such, only provides broad guidelines along which to proceed in the development of an object or practice. When time for implementation of a plan comes, the planner or implementor is confronted with a 'reality' which may run counter with the plan. In order to take care of changing conditions and circumstances, the plan must be flexible and amenable to modification. The reader will perhaps appreciate this characteristic if an analogy of an architectural plan or design is used. An architectural design is usually created at the drawing board. Although the architect has base line data from his/her field work, to enable him/her to include

specific requirements in the construction of the structure, certain realities not included or anticipated in the plan emerge during the construction phase. Flexibility is, therefore, called for if the objective is to have a good structure standing on the ground.

When planning social service systems like education, the planner should also guard against overstating or understating the system's goals. When goals are overstated, whatever is accomplished, when measured against the targeted goals may seem to indicate that the plan failed when in fact the fault is really at the goal formulation stage. The writer is, of course, aware of the political advantages that can be accrued by doing this. But from the point of view of planning, it does not really help the implementing system. When, on the other hand, understated goals are accomplished, it gives the people working in the system psychological satisfaction and complacency that a good job has been done when in fact, more could have been achieved. In addition, when the goals are imprecise, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness or efficiency of the implementing system because there is no concrete base against which to measure the outcome of the plan during the evaluation phase.

To come up with realistic goals is, admittedly, no easy task. But one way of going about this is that once the goals of the plan have been formulated, based on the

present and future needs of the country, they should be pegged against present or projected resources and the time available to accomplish them. In so doing, they can either be scaled down or up to realistic levels. The principle to adhere here is to first formulate the goals and not the other way round. To draw a plan by first considering the resources available followed by the goals or targets to be achieved, is not recommended because one runs into the danger of producing shortsighted plans which do not address present and future needs and aspirations of the country in which the plan will operate.

As this study is looking at curriculum decision making process in secondary schools in Malawi, the present organizational structure and decision making process of the entire ministry, will be analyzed in Chapter IV. This will provide a broader context for discussing curriculum planning and decision making in secondary schools in the country.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter will review literature on the following areas:

- Policy Making Processes and Strategies.
- Decision Making Processes and Strategies.
- The relationship between Information, Communication and Decision Making.
- Curriculum Planning, Development, Implementation and Evaluation Processes.
- Teacher, Student and Parental Participation in Decision Making.
- Centralized and Decentralized Decision Making Systems.
- Selected Country Profiles of Curriculum Decision Making Processes.

Curriculum Planning and decision making in a country is guided by policy. So, this review will begin by looking at theoretical and practical issues, and problems in policy making. But before this is done, a brief review of the meanings people attach to the terms "policy," "planning" and "decision making" is necessary.

An Overview of Meanings of Policy, Planning and Decision Making

The term policy has been given a variety of meanings. One of the reasons for this is the intellectual and

abstract nature of the term and the fact that issues at policy level are complex. Increasing the rigor of the definition of policy, and establishing its descriptive limits, can contribute to our ability to improve the policy decision making processes.

Heclo (1972) defines policy as a "course of action intended to accomplish some end." Other writers in the field like Cistone (1977), Harman (1980) give similar definitions. Heclo, however, does not consider specific decisions or actions made by the administrator or policy maker. But he concludes that there is, nevertheless, a certain ambiguity as to whether or not policy is more than intended course of action. The term policy needs to embrace both what is intended (policy objectives) and what occurs as a result of the intention (policy outcomes). Heinz, Eulau and Prewitt (1962) came much to the same understanding of policy by saying that policy is a strictly theoretical construct inferred from the patterns of relevant choice behavior. Policy is distinguished from policy goals, policy intentions, and policy choices (decisions). They define policy as "a standing decision characterized by behavioral consistency and repetitiveness on the part of both those who make it and those who abide it." Writing about the multiple usage of the term policy, Pressman says:

> In every day discourse, we use policy (when referring to decisions) in several strikingly

> different ways. Sometimes policy means a statement of intention: Our policy is to increase employment among minorities. Policy here is treated as a broad statement of goals and objectives. Nothing is said about what might be done to accomplish that purpose. Other times we speak as if it were equivalent to actual behavior: Our policy is to hire minorities, meaning that we do actually hire them. Policy in this sense signifies the goal and its achievement (1975:xiv).

Pressman concludes that, we can work neither with a definition of policy that excludes any implementation nor one that includes all implementation. "The separation of policy design from implementation is fatal." It is no better than mindless implementation without a sense of direction. Though we can isolate policy and implementation for separate discussion, the purpose of our analysis is to bring them into closer correspondence with each other.

According to Dror (1971) planning is deciding in advance what is to be done; that is, a plan is a projected course of action. Planning is the working out in broad outline the things that need to be done and the methods for doing them to accomplish the purpose of the enterprise. From the process point of view, Dror (1971), sees planning as "a process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future, directed at achieving goals by preferable means." This definition includes five elements:

1. Planning as a process - a continuous activity taking place within a unit and requiring some input

of resources and energy in order to be sustained.

2. Involves preparation of anticipated courses of action.
3. Action (or decision for action). Planning is primarily directed at action.
4. Futuristic: Planning is directed at the future; within this element there are the sub-elements of prediction (forecasting) and uncertainty.
5. Goal directed: The planning process cannot operate unless it has more or less defined goals to the achievement of which it recommendations for action in the future are directed.

Another school of thought regards rationality and the utilization of knowledge as characterizing planning. Agreeing with this stance Merriam (1941), sees planning as an organized effort to utilize social intelligence in the determination of national policies. Here, planning is seen as a tool in policy making, that is, for policy to be determined, policy makers have to go through a systematic planning process. Another way of linking planning to policy is to see the latter as a guide to the whole process of planning. At each level, that is, the policy making and the planning levels, decisions are taken. One way of trying to clarify the relationship between policy making and decision making on the one hand, and planning and

decision making on the other, is that both are decision making processes. It takes a set of decisions when formulating policy and when drawing out a plan. For example, planning involves a series of decisions such as: What should be done? When? How? Where? By whom? To answer these questions the planner has to make decisions from a range of possible choices.

Policy making and planning processes tend to overlap. One logical way of looking at the two processes is to see policy making coming first and planning processes following. In fact if we take seriously Pressman's (1975) warning that "the separation of policy design from policy implementation is fatal," when one goes into the process of planning, policy guides the planner and when the plan reaches the implementing stage, this is in fact synonymous to preparing an implementation policy. Another useful way of differentiating policy making and planning processes is that the type of action prescribed in a policy is one that is to be performed under a specific, not a particular condition, that is, one that might occur at more than one time-space intersection, whereas, the kind of action prescribed in a plan refers to a particular situation and more often than not, with a prescribed time span. Illuminating the argument further, Heslep says:

> ...a policy prescribing action tells its recipient: whenever you encounter a condition of such and such

> kind, you are to do such and such. Because a policy recommends action to be repeated under similar conditions, it sets forth a course of action, not a particular action (1987:425).

Since planning is a continuous process, and necessitates the constant re-examination of trends, tendencies and policies in order to adapt and adjust governmental policies with the least possible friction and loss, it becomes the policy maker's tool for policy review. To this we can extend Pressman's caveat to policy making and planning by saying that "the separation of policy making from planning processes is fatal."

Comprehensive policy review in countries like Malawi that use long range planning and ten years to their national and educational programs is recommended before the country embarks on another ten year plan. Of course, policy evaluation should take place during the implementation of any plan in order to assess how effective educational policy is at solving educational problems. Data from this formative evaluation helps in determining how far the Plan is achieving its intended objectives before the life cycle of the plan is completed. This is very important because it gives the system corrective feedback and the needed flexibility which is prerequisite for effective policy implementation.

Operationally, planning is one of the functions of the manager, and as such involves the selection from among

alternatives of enterprise objectives, policies, procedures and programs. It is thus, decision making affecting the future course of action, the basing of decisions on purpose, facts and considered estimates (Harold Koontz and O'Donnel, 1964). Looking at planning as a process, we see it as touching upon every aspect of management, including decision making, budgeting, co-ordination, communications and problems of structure. Planning in a word is management (Simon, et al. 1950).

According to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary a decision is: "(1) the action of deciding (a contest, question, etc.; settlement, determination, a conclusion, judgement; (2) the making of one's mind, a resolution." Conceptually speaking a decision is a course of action which is chosen in such a way that the thinking process is "cut off" (in fact, etymologically speaking, the word is Latin derivative meaning to "cut off") and serious consideration of other possibilities ended. This definition is in agreement with Moddy's (1983) definition which says, "a decision is an act that must be taken when there is no more time for gathering facts" (Moody, 1983:4).

Turban, et al (1981) define decision "as a conclusion of a process by which one chooses between two or more available alternative courses of action for the purpose of attaining goals. The process is called decision making." Juniper (1971) defines decision making as the process by

which a person selects from two, or more possible choices. A decision does not exist unless there is more than one course of action, alternative or possibility to consider, but if a choice exists, the process of deciding may be utilized. Following through this argument, Mann (1975), argues:

> If, for example, one alternative within a set has such compelling and attractive features that there is no point in comparing it with other alternatives, then there is really no "choice". In that case, the perceived excellence of one course of action forecloses any necessity to make a decision (1975:20).

One way of distinguishing policy from decision is to look at policy ingredients. According to Jones ( ), there are five policy ingredients:

Goals: the desired ends to be achieved.

Plans or proposals: specified means for achieving the goals.

Programs: authorized means for achieving goals.

Decisions: specific action taken to set goals, develop plans, implement and evaluate programs.

Effects: the measurable impacts of programs (intended and unintended; primary and secondary). In sum, then we can conclude that a policy is greater than a decision. However, one can reasonably use "policy" as an adjective with each components above, but it becomes confusing if the term "policy" is used interchangeably with all of them.

Policy Making Processes and Strategies

The ingredients of policy can be better understood if they are looked from the context of policy making process. According to Lindblom (1980), policy making starts with the formulation or analysis of a policy problem, formulation of issues for action, legislation of the intended action and evaluation of the policy. It is at the legislation stage when a policy is legitimated and where issues for action can be implemented

At policy making level, we can distinguish two types of decisions: policy planning decisions that take place at the formulation of policy, and policy implementation decisions, those taking place during the implementation and evaluation stages.

Tinbergen's (1981) analytical policy making process like Lindblom's also emphasizes on the analysis of a problem. His prescription for an ideal analytical process is for the policy maker to pursue a problem upon an agreed upon set of values, second, to clearly formulate the aims of the policy in advance of choosing among alternative policies, third, the policy maker should attempt to draw a comprehensive overview of policy problems and alternative policies. Writing about problem solving in public administration Marshall Dimock endorses fundamentally the same ideal method:

> First, there are always the problem and issues. Second, there are facts and analyzes that need to be applied. Third, there is the setting forth of alternatives and the pros and cons applicable to each possible solution - all this in the light of larger institutional goals and objectives. Fourth, there is the decision proper, which depends upon choosing among alternatives (1958:?)

Policy problems, according to Mann (1975), have the following distinguishing characteristics:

> (1) they are public in nature, (2) they are very consequential,
> (3) they are complex, (4) they are dominated by uncertainty, and (5) they reflect and are affected by disagreement about the goals to be pursued (Mann 1975:11).

Since problems and needs are major sources of policy, an elaboration of the above characteristics is called for.

Policy problems are public in nature because they are perceived as needs that are now, or are about to be appropriate for governmental action. Agreeing with this posture, Gergen says, "Until public behavior is actually affected, it is not proper to speak of public policy formation" (1968:188). Public policy problems are defined, in part, as those for which government action is now appropriate. Wife beating was considered in some societies as something outside the realm of government action, but as the problem escalated and as women began to raise public awareness of the brutality of such action, many governments

now regard it as a public problem. The second defining characteristic of policy problems has to do with their importance. Importance is measured either in terms of impact on individuals or in terms of the level of the need implicated, or both terms combined. Policy problems are consequential because they combine fundamental (and often political) relationships with substantial numbers of people. Policy problems are complex because at this level, they are imbedded in an interactive network of economic, political, psychological, social, and moral components. Mann, illustrates the complexity of problems thus:

> School violence is not due to a simple breakdown of discipline or traditional virtues. As a policy problem, violence is related to the content of the curriculum, to the kind and nature of teacher pupil interaction, to the physical plant of the school, and to its authority system. But since violence undoubtedly has an effect on teachers, administrators, and even the physical plant, those in-school factors interact with, are responsive to, and to some extent shape, the factors that were themselves the origin of the behavior. Beyond that the in-school factors may be less important than the student's family life, the prevailing political culture...and the student's perceived economic life chances... Thus, school violence, like all political problems, is so multi-faceted, and the facets are so interactive, that as a policy problem it represents a veritable labyrinth for analysis and action (1975:13-14).

Policy problems are characterized by uncertainty because of the imprecise nature of problems and the fact that they are not susceptible to easy solutions. Policy problems and resolutions to problems are stated with a

future in mind. Their shape, salience, and relationships with other areas may all be changed by the time the long process of recognition to formulation and implementation (and hopefully to "solution") has been carried out. The role of the future is the major factor explaining this uncertainty. The last characteristic which Mann (1975) discusses is that of differing interests. This is inevitable when we consider how heterogeneous society is, how public policy problems are, and their consequential nature.

Tinbergen and Dimock (1982) call for a systematic canvassing of possible alternative policies, for a similarly systematic analysis of the consequences of each possible alternative possibility, and for policy choices to serve goals or objectives somehow separately established. Comprehensiveness, it is generally accepted, is an ideal rather than an achievement because the impossibility of achieving a completely full account of the consequences of each alternative policy under analysis is sometimes conceded. Still, the ideal remains, and the policy maker is still told: "Be comprehensive". Tinbergen and Dimock insist that as an ideal, the specification of objectives precedes the final choice of means. To solve a problem, it is generally believed, its conditions must be finally fixed. Hence, even if for a time, fact suggests value and

vice versa, at some point, values must be fixed so that choice can be made.

Perhaps the most difficult area to deal with in policy analysis is political feasibility or the probability that a policy alternative will be accepted and implemented. One of the best known manifestations is giving the boss what he wants. The most powerful, authoritarian, and doctrinaire the leadership the more insecure the policy advocate(s), the higher the probability that the boss will be given not only the policy decision he is known to prefer but none other.

This phenomena combined with the normal conservatism of the incremental policy making model can infuse a system with the concept "the more feasible the better" and can be a serious constraint in the identification of innovative policy alternatives. Furthermore, not everything feasible or desirable, applicable or effective for the problem at hand.

Political feasibility is ephemeral with changes that are difficult to predict. System crises usually change political feasibility. An almost universal side-effect of natural or human produced catastrophes is that the political feasibility environment is suddenly changed. The problem for the policy analyst is to understand the political feasibility environment, but not to be completely limited by it. Completely ignoring political feasibility

is one of the best ways to have an analysis discredited by leadership. On the other hand, failing to offer alternatives that may be outside the current domain of political feasibility, but nevertheless preferable, is an abdication of the objectivity expected of the analyst.

Having discussed policy making processes, the ground is now cleared to look at policy making strategies. Policy making strategies include guidelines, scope, postures and main directions to be followed by specific policies. Various models have been advanced to help in the process of policy making. Krone (1980) identified "seven pure" types of policy making that are and have been used for public and private policy making:

1. The Rational Model

This model, assumes that human actions approximates, or should approximate rationality. Its typical phases include identifying a problem, gathering data, listing all possible solutions, testing all solutions, selecting the best, and acting. It ignores extra rational variables. Appraising this model, Braybrooke and Lindblom (1963) have called it the "synoptic ideal". It is synoptic because it requires a comprehensive understanding and analysis of a problem and systematic examination of alternative means of attaining solutions to the problem. It is ideal because it

is almost never possible to meet the conditions of comprehensiveness.

A number of limitations have been levelled against this model: Its application is feasible only when one can specify with certainty all alternatives and criteria. Second, the decision maker using it must be able to predict with certainty all alternatives and criteria. Third, the decision maker must be able to predict with certainty or known levels of risk in all of the possible consequences associated with each alternative in terms of all the relevant criteria. Fourth, the model has no provision for dealing with or resolving value conflicts which occur in group decision making processes, and finally, it does not consider efficiency in the gathering of relevant data for which the decision will be based.

The rational problem solving strategy has been challenged by other scholars. Bruner, Goodnow and Austin (1956), for example, conducted an experiment involving subjects with printed deck of cards in which the subjects were permitted to select single cards in any order they wishes, and to ask whether or not they are members of the subset. They found that, it is not true that the best way to solve a problem is to be comprehensive especially when in reality there is always time constraint imposed in the decision making process. Disagreeing with the synoptic ideal, Johnson (1955) says that the mind flees from

comprehensiveness, that an object of perception or judgement is referred not the whole world but to a specific background or framework. He argues that our minds determine what is relevant and irrelevant, by imposing a structure upon the problem situation and this structure tends to vary from mind to mind. Hardin (1947) agrees with this when he says that different people have different insights and that this phenomena is not merely an occasional intellectual aberration but is both desirable and in many ways inevitable.

Others, have dissented from the synoptic ideal because they have perceived that the character of actual and ideal decision making is dependent upon the level of the decision maker's aspirations and is consequently altered in many ways quite foreign to the synoptic method. Simon's satisfying process model is the best example of this type of alteration. In this model, one aims at tolerable level of satisfaction rather than at maximization. The only reasonable conclusion one can make from the above limitations, is that the synoptic ideal is less than adequate as a general model to guide decision making.

Critics of the synoptic method, however suggest that analysts do in fact find alternative strategies that can sometimes be exploited with great skill. Thus, in the experiment with cards, referred to earlier, the subject adapted to unreasonable demands on their cognitive

faculties by "focusing" rather than "scanning". Simon's model is another adaptation to limited cognitive faculties and costliness of search, just as Popper's ( ) "piecemeal engineering" is an adaptation to the discrepancy between complexity of the problem and the capacity of the human mind (Lindblom, 1969). The key concept here is adaption. The synoptic ideal, like the rational deductive ideal and welfare function methods, is distinguishable by its failure to incorporate adaptation features. The synoptic ideal is not adapted due to: man's limited problem solving capacities, inadequacy of information, the costliness of analysis and failure in constructing satisfactory evaluative method, the closeness of observed relationships between fact and value in policy making, the openness of the system's variables with which it contends, and the diverse forms to which policy problems actually arise.

Stufflebeam and associates (1971) have stated that the synoptic model has some utility within limited realm of homeostatic decision making. By "homeostatic" they mean decision making which is restorative in nature, and which aims at maintaining the normal balance in an educational system. Under these circumstances, they argue, the decision maker can conceivably identify all or nearly all the relevant alternatives, specify the conditions under which they are going to be applied, and predict with all

certainty, the consequences of all the alternatives in terms of the criteria considered relevant.

Espousing a traditional scientific position, Mann (1975) says that it would be wrong to conclude that the unavailability of scientific rationality is a licence of either to guess or simply emit behavior. Decision makers can neither use scientific rationality as a guide to policy decisions nor escape its imperatives. Even though they may be unattainable, science and rationality are standards against which we measure our behavior, he contends.

2. The Economically Rational Model

This is widely accepted model in organizations because economic rationality aims at the maximum achievement of plural goals within resource constraints. Rather than being pointed at the relatively simple one-goal situation, the model makes the assumption that in most instances we have a number of objectives and we seek to do as well as possible on as many as possible. Since there are plural goals, however, economic rationality must proceed, at least in part, through comparison. In order to compare different things, they must be related to a common value, and that value must both be related to a common value. A second condition of economic rationality is that the means to be used to realize any given goal should be capable of being used to achieve another goal. A third condition is that there must be a fairly complete information about how the

system works (production functions). Alice Rivlin (1971) defines an education production function:

> ...fairly stable relationships between the quantity and the quality of the inputs and the curriculum and methods, and the results...(1971:76).

Obviously in the absence of information about what is causing what else, it will be impossible to allocate resources to the places where they will do most good. The next condition following this is that all resources must be made according to marginal utility. A more precise statement advanced by Diesing (1962) is:

> the use to which the last means is assigned should not be less important than any remaining disallowed use (1962:20).

The final condition for economic rationality to prevail is that, those people who are making decisions must be able to carry out the allocations and, other transactions that are indicated by their calculations.

3. The Incremental Change Model

This model holds that policy should be made through slow evolution and cautious change, and that objectives should be adjusted to feasible means; that optimal quality is utopian; that satisfactory quality is the best obtainable; is conservative; is skeptical about human

ability to radically change the future. The essence of this principle has been summarized by Dror:

> The basic idea of this model is that the more different an alternative is from past policies, the more difficult it is to predict its consequences...Largely because of this fact, the more different an alternative is from past policies, the more difficult it is to recruit support for it, that is, the smaller its political feasibility is. Since radically innovative policies have a large chance of being unfeasible, this model says, policy making should be basically "conservative", and should limit innovations to marginal changes...One point in this model's favor is that it describes actual decision making behavior... Most public policy in modern (but not all contemporary societies) is made by incremental changes in older policies. [W]e can see why this model has become rather popular (1968:148).

The idea of incrementalism as presented by Lindblom and Braybrooke (1963), refers to the fact that most changes are relatively small and affect only the edges or margins of existing activities. The "disjointed" feature of disjointed incrementalism calls attention to the many disparate and relatively uncoordinated influence and phases that characterize most decisions. Thus, disjointed incrementalism stresses the haphazard interaction through which most policy decisions come to affect relatively small parts of the problem situation. This model describes well the actions of a prudent decision maker when only small changes are needed, he/she is uncertain about how to produce them and prefers not to incur large expenses to

gather information. The focus here is more on current needs and problem analysis and successive approximation of a solution, rather than attempting to consider all possible alternatives or to arrive at the best possible solution. The decision maker continuously explores to improve the means currently in use. The kind of change, therefore sought, is developmental rather than restorative or innovative.

The incremental change model is similar to Schwab's (1969) "practical arts". Schwab states that the practical arts begin with the requirement that existing institutions and practices be preserved and altered piecemeal, not dismantled and replaced. It is further necessary that changes be so planned and articulated with what remains unchanged that the functioning of the whole remains coherent and unimpaired. The very nature of the practical necessitates the maintenance and improvement of patterns of purposed actions, and especially concerned that the effects of the pattern through time shall retain coherence and relevance to another. To exemplify this, Schwab ( ) uses a legal example:

> Statutes are repealed or largely rewritten only as a last resort, since to do so creates confusion and diremption between old judgement under the law and judgement to come, confusion which may lead to either weakening of the law through disrepute or a painful and costly process of repairing the effects of past judgments so as to bring them into conformity with the new (In Gress, 1978:499).

The same requirements, he adds, holds for a practical program of improvement of education where changes are effected in small progressions, in coherence with what remains unchanged, and this would require that educationalists know what is and has been going on in schools.

4. The Sequential Decision Model

This model is used when insufficient knowledge or consensus is available; commences with simultaneous and redundant approaches, or decides on phase I, assuming new knowledge or consensus will emerge for subsequent phases; then selects preferred alternatives as knowledge and feasibility emerge. It offers alternative to decision under extreme uncertainty or no decision.

5. The Extra Rational Model

Policy flows from extra rational characteristics of a system without a rational link.

6. The No Decision Model

This model describes a situation where the decision maker decides not to make a decision hoping that eventually the problem will resolve itself with time. A decision not to make a decision even when a decision situation exists, is a decision itself (Cornell, 1980).

7. The Radical Change Model

Also known as the planned change model, this model is conceptualized to serve the purpose of large change and involves many steps and agencies over a relatively long span of time. The decision setting for the radical change model has been described by Stufflebeam and associates as neomobilistic. By this, they mean that decision making is innovative and unlike the rational or incremental change model, change here is supported by little theory and extant knowledge. The model addresses long range objectives, it is more costly and its risks are high. In trying to illustrate this point, Stufflebeam and associates cite the United States Program to place man on the moon in the sixties. This program was comprehensive, strategic, costly and risky; characteristics of neomobilistic decision setting.

Clark and Guba (1967) has proposed a model for planned change in education worth considering here. The model is based on a taxonomy for classifying the many activities of the planned change process: research, development, diffusion and adoption as in a typical Research Development and Diffusion (RD-D) approach. The first activity in the change process is research. The objectives of research is to advance knowledge, and the criteria for determining the quality of new knowledge are internal and external validity. Research here is expected to produce theoretical basis for change.

To illustrate the other change activities, the researcher will use a hypothetical case for curriculum change: Research has shown that curriculum materials in science whose content is based on the learner's local environment, increases understanding of scientific concepts. Current curriculum development practice in country X is centralized. Materials for science curriculum are developed at one center and disseminated to all schools. Although the development takes into consideration of learners' needs, they do not take into full consideration the diversity of the learning environment in the country. To make the situation worse, teachers are not supposed to tamper with the science guides, resulting on very little innovative modifications to the teaching of science at classroom level. The science curriculum therefore, falls short of meeting the important criteria for science that, scientific concepts and principles are best learned when they are directly applied to the local physical environment.

Educational authorities in the country are aware of this problem and have decided to introduce changes in the way science materials are developed and used in schools. Since this change will occur in a centralized educational system, it is radical in that it will eventually supplant present centrally developed curriculum materials and procedures. The co-ordination of a school based curriculum

development program would entail a re-organization of the administrative structure of the central office. In sum, a great deal of creative endeavor and resources to solve the change problems will come into effect. All of these issues would have to be considered before such a large scale change procedure could be designed and implemented. The above characteristics of the above example conforms well to a neomobilistic change setting.

The second stage in the change process is the development of the new science curriculum. There are, according to Clark and Guba (1971) four sub-activities involved in the development stage. Invention, design, construction and assembly. In this example, the "assembly line" metaphor will not be used because unlike in the manufacturing industry, the boundary between "construction" and "assembly" of a curriculum are at best blurred. Suffice it to say, the development stage would involve the formulation of general objectives of the program followed by the designing and subsequent development of a teachers' guide and students' working manual. These curriculum materials would act only as a guide since the main emphasis in the science curriculum is to allow teachers and students to teach and learn science according to the dictates of the learning environment. The coverage of the more abstract scientific concepts and principles would follow the more practically illustrative and applicable concepts and principles.

The third stage, the diffusion stage would be to inform school administrators, teachers, examination officials, and parents of the proposed science curriculum. Change agents from the central office and the curriculum development center, would disseminate information about the new program to drum up support for the adoption of the program. Unlike the power-coercive strategy described by Chin and Benne (1969) or the center-periphery model as explicated by Schon (1973) where opinions of the various interested people in education would not be sought before introducing the change, this change model would use a blending of the Social-interactive model and the normative re-education strategy in order to involve as many people as possible in the change process.

The final stage of the change model is the adoption. Clark and Guba divide the adoption stage into four sub-activities, namely; training, trial, installation, and institutionalization. These sub-activities are all justifiable. Training of teachers in the use of the new materials would be required for the successful implementation of the program. Before wholesale implementation of the new curriculum into the schools, it would be necessary to test the effectiveness of the curriculum and to modify those elements in the design proved ineffective. The writer will turn to the details of this curriculum development activity later on in the study.

Once the new curriculum has been proved effective, then all schools in the country would be asked to adopt the new curriculum. The last sub-activity of institutionalization is to routinize the new curriculum as an integral part of the system's curriculum .

The knowledge and understanding of the above policy making models, enables the policy analyst to identify the basic model, or model mixes in use by a system or organization and leads him or her to offer policy strategies with which decision makers are most comfortable and also to the possibility of alternative policy making models to the decision maker as well as for specific problems. The process also facilitates the acceptance of new policy making strategies by incumbent policy and decision makers in organizations.

As stated earlier, a policy is still in its abstract and intellectual form until it is implemented. Implementation as a process always makes or changes policy in some degree. Administrators in the process of implementing a policy, alter or make policy. Lindblom (1969), offers several reasons why policy undergoes this process by saying that policy makers allow administrators to design large elements of the policy that they have only begun to design. In other words, policy statements are issued imprecisely and this leaves the administrator to interpret and put into action what he or she thinks that

policy implies at the implementation level. This is what Lindblom called "incomplete specification of ostensible policy" (Lindblom, 1969:65). Secondly, there is what he calls "conflicting criteria for application". Whenever policy makers specify the various conflicting criteria which they intend to govern the application of a policy, policy making falls in some degree into the administrator's hands. For example, a provision for minimum standards of science education equipment might be based according to the criteria: cost of science equipment and the Ministry of Education's ability to pay. Although the two constitute a reasonable set of guidelines, they point in opposite directions; one calling for higher expenditure and the other calling for lower. Under these circumstances, a significant part of actual determination of policy lies in the hands of the administrator.

Incentive failures also explain why policy undergoes significant alteration during implementation. To this Lindblom says:

> In an authority system, [as in centralized system] those commanded will obey, but only partially and with some misdirection because of personal incentives conflicting with their rule of obedience. Sometimes, for example, an administrator's desire to avoid hard [decisions]...his or her inclination to take on unpleasantries of enforcing policy, ...career ambitions deterring him or her from wishing to be associated with unpopular policy, turns out to be what the administrators choose to do, not what an ostensible policy decision declares (1969:66).

In certain cases, those implementing policy often receive conflicting policy directives from more than one source. Faced with conflicting policy directives, government departments set actual policy. That is why in centralized decision making settings, administrators are sometimes hesitant to implement policy because of the incomplete specification of the ostensible policy. They fear that if the policy is not properly implemented or simply a bad policy, the blame will be placed on them. The policy makers themselves usually absolve or distance themselves from the negative effects of the policy. One way of solving this problem is to make sure that policy emanates from the wishes and felt needs of the people, and that during the analysis state, as many people as possible are involved in the process. In addition, the channels of communication about the impending policy are open so that the policy makers can get feedback from the people from whom policy is being made. With this strategy, when the policy is finally implemented, the administrators fear of public reaction is minimized because the policy underwent some deliberative process and hopefully some consensus was built around the policy.

In other cases, policy changes occur during the implementation stage because administrators do not know what the policy requires them to do. Not knowing how to implement the policy, they experiment with a variety of

policies of their design, or simply use the policy decision making model of not acting.

The final point which Lindblom makes about the metamorphosis of policy during implementation is inadequate administrative resources. Administrators sometimes lack the authority and other necessary controls, including staff and funds to carry ostensible policy. This is certainly true with most educational institutions where the gap between the resources needed to successfully implement a policy and the available resources is wide. Faced with these constraints, the administrator has to make policy to a degree by deciding to which activities the limited funds and human resources will be assigned and how energetically this or that part of policy will be pursued.

For all these reasons, the conditions in which administrators are expected to implement policy, compel them to join in the policy making process. In addition, since most observed policy is incremental and thus, proceeds through trial and error, Lindblom says:

> Whenever next steps correct the inadequacies of a preceding step, implementation of each step in policy making becomes a principal source of feedback information for the next steps. The record of implementation of earlier policies constantly pushes policy in new direction with new information (1969:68).

Implementation aside, administrators or bureaucrats perform another major role in policy making. At the higher levels, they serve as the principal immediate source of analysis and advice for ostensible policy makers. That is why in Malawi, like in other countries, the Principal Secretary (the administrative head of a Ministry, advises the Minister on matters relating to policy. The latter is the ostensible policy maker by virtue of his or her or politically appointed position.

In the British system, every elected official recognizes that while he or she may come and go, the civil servant steadily proceeds to turn out policy studies and recommendations for the elected chiefs (Cabinet Ministers). Top government officials understand that on most policy issues, elected officials can give only direction to policy makers in the civil service.

The above policy making and implementation processes, refer to a dimension of policy analysis which is professional and scientific. Professional analysts become experts in seeking approximates of what economists call Pareto-efficient solutions, solutions which compared to existing state of affairs benefit all or benefit some parties without injuring others (Lindblom, 1980). A deep conflict runs through common attitudes towards policy making. On the one hand, people want policy to be informed and well analyzed (the intellectual dimension), on the

other, they want policy to be democratic, hence necessarily political. The distinction between the two could be put as one between reaching policy choices by information and analysis, on the one hand, or by exerting power, on the other. In the latter case, knowledge about the source of this power is very crucial in determining whether the policy has been reached by democratic means or not. In some political systems, the determination of source(s) of power is an elusive exercise.

Critics of analytical policy making say this process of policy making is limited; it is fallible, it cannot wholly resolve conflicts of values and interests. In addition it is slow and costly, and it cannot tell us conclusively which problem to attack.

Proponents of the strategic ideal endorse the partisan use of analysis. They, however, do not deny the value of bringing science and/or social science more and more into the service of policy making, but they see the scientific vision or ideal as not very useful because it fails to give guidance. They argue that when scientific problem solvers face a complex problem which they cannot master, they fall back on hasty improvisations. The usefulness of the strategic ideal is that it accepts the subordination of analysis to politics, creating competition among analysts, accepting partisanship, and using a variety of simplification such as trial and error.

Proponents the scientific vision, on the other hand, find a great deal wrong with the vision of strategic policy making. They believe that the crudities of political controversy and of political interaction cannot substitute for the processes of rational choice. They also claim that such devices as trial and error and simplifications of problems are error prone and, therefore, cannot act as guidelines. The strategists rebut by saying that the very attempt to extend analysis beyond what it can do and the refusal to develop guidelines for coping with its incapacities - the feature of scientific policy making - render it also error prone.

All these shortcomings of analysis in policy making bring us back to the necessity of politics. This takes us to look into more detail of interactional analysis. At this point it is important to clarify what is really meant by analytical and interactional policy making process. When we say that policies are decided by analysis, we mean that an investigation of the merits of various possible action has disclosed reasons for choosing one policy over others. When, on the other hand, we say that politics rather than analysis determines policy, we mean that policy is set by the various ways in which people exert control, influence or power over each other.

When analytical and the interactional (strategic) decision making strategies are linked with centralized and decentralized decision making settings, the analytical

model tends to be used in centralized systems because the task of policy analysis is entrusted to bureaucrats and technocrats at the top with very little involvement of those in the lower hierarchy. In contrast, advocates of the strategic vision favor a decentralized structure because it allows for more bottom-up participation or interaction.

Despite their conflicts proponents of both ideals agree that in actual practice policy makers and analysts must use various simplifying strategies. Many, see policy making as an ever ending process in which "continual nibbling substitutes for the good bite that may never be offered" (Lindblom, 1980:38). The nibbling strategy focuses the policy maker's analysis on more familiar, better known experience, sharply reduces the number and complexity of factors to be analyzed, takes advantage of feedback information, and limits analysis to what is politically feasible.

Decision Making Processes and Strategies

Before an attempt is made at describing the decision making processes and strategies, it is important to first understand the typology of decisions. Various experts in the field of decision theory have advanced numerous ways of classifying decisions. Perhaps the best known of these classification is the distinction proposed by Simon (1960)

between programmed and non-programmed decisions. According to Simon:

> Decisions are programmed to the extent that they are repetitive and routine, to the extent that a definite procedure has been worked out for handling them... If a particular problem recurs often enough, a routine procedure will usually be worked out for solving it... Decisions are non-programmed to the extent that they are novel, unstructured, and consequential. There is no cut-and-dried method for handling the problem because it hasn't arisen before, or because its precise nature and structure are elusive or complex, or because it is important that it deserves custom-tailored treatment (1960:5-6).

Other writers in the field, have made the same distinction as Simon, but have labelled them differently. For example, Drucker (1967) labelled programmed decisions "generic" and non-programmed decisions "unique". Delbecq called them "routine" and "creative" respectively. He, however, added a third classification which he called "negotiated decisions". Negotiated decisions are those decisions made when opposing factions confront each other concerning either ends or means, or both because of differences in norms, values or vested interest.

Although the above typologies show these distinctions, however, there is still a high degree of commonality between the decision types. In essence, the decision classes can be reduced into two basic categories conceptualized below.

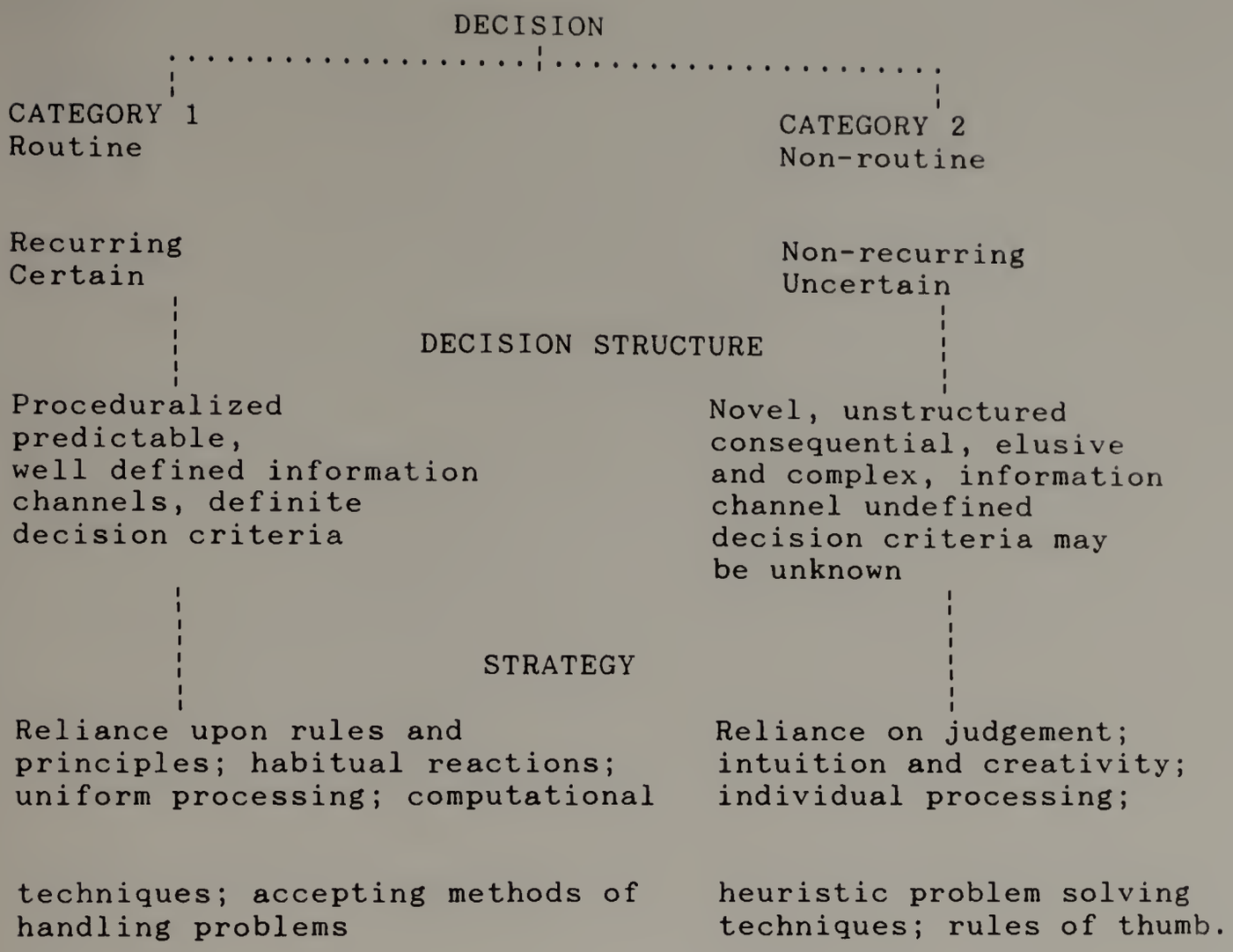

Figure 2.1: A Categorization of Decision Characteristics (Adapted from Harrison, 1978).

Apart from showing the two basic classes of decisions, the illustration above shows the classes according to their structures and strategies. The importance of differentiating between the two basic categories becomes apparent when one realizes that educational decision making in bureaucracies is highly routinized yet, not all educational problems are predictable. The differentiation

of routine from non-routine decisions can help decision makers in using appropriate decision making strategies according to the nature of problem(s) faced by the system.

Writing on decision characteristics, Moody (1983), distinguishes five decision characteristics and associates these characteristics with the level at which decisions can be taken: (1) Futurity - This sub-divided into long term and short term decisions. The former is associated with high level decision making while the latter with low level decision making capacity. (2) Reversibility - Decisions which are difficult to reverse, are made at the highest level of an organization's hierarchy while those which can easily be reversible, are made at low levels of decision making hierarchy. (3) Impact - This characteristic relates to the extent to which other areas or activities are affected. If the impact is extensive, then a high level decision is indicated; a singular impact relates to a low-level decision. (4) Quality - This factor relates to labor relations, ethical values, legal considerations, basic principles of conduct, organizational image, and so on. If many of these factors are involved, a high level decision is needed and if only few factors are relevant, a low level decision is indicated. (5) Periodicity - This element relates to whether the decision is made frequently or not. A rare decision is a high level decision, whereas frequently made decision is a low level decision. Moody's

categorization helps in defining decision making boundaries according to decision characteristics.

When the two categories of decision characteristics are analyzed closely, two broad decision making strategies emerge: Category 1 (Figure 2.1) is related to rational decision making strategies while Category 2 demands an interactional decision making strategy as proposed by Lindblom.

Despite the fact that we have various classes of decisions and strategies for making decisions, the procedures or processes for arriving at a decision are basically the same; although it may be stated that the process for routine decision making is not as rigorous in the sense that the solutions to the problem confronting the decision maker is more or less known.

John Dewey (1910), is credited with perhaps the most succinct list of procedural decision questions to ask when making a decision:

- What is the problem?
- What are the alternatives?
- Which alternatives are best? (in Cornell, 1980)

Lipham (1974) and Turban, et al. (1981), see the decision making process in a similar light like Dewey. Other scholars have enlarged upon Dewey's fundamental

decision steps to make more elaborate ones such as the following:

- o Recognize the need for decision making (a decision in itself)
- o Consider and analyze alternatives (replete with decisions)
- o Select an alternative to attain a goal (the decision)
- o Communicate and implement the decision (involving the decision whom to communicate and especially the decision how to communicate)
- o Evaluation and review (decisions again as to criteria and the need for further study) (Cornell, 1980:10).

March and Simon have described the same general conception of decision making as it appears in the literature of statistical decision theory and economics, where, incidentally, it explicitly includes a social welfare function. They state:

1. When we faced him in the decision making situation, he [the decision maker] already has laid out before him, the whole set of alternatives from which he will choose his action.
2. To each alternative is attached a set of consequences.
3. At the outset the decision maker has a "utility function" or a "preference ordering" that ranks all of consequences from the most preferred to the most least preferred.
4. The decision maker selects the alternative leading set of consequences (March and Simon, 1958).

Although the decision maker follows the above decision making steps, the quality of decisions made vary from individual to individual. This variation seems to confirm that decision making is more of an art than a science. There are five basic decision ingredients which explain some of this variation: (1) Facts - Facts are gathered for both sides of the question pro and con, in order to define the problem. However, if facts cannot be obtained, the decision must be based on the available data, which fall into the category of general information; (2) Knowledge - If the decision maker has knowledge of either the circumstances surrounding the problem or a similar situation, then this knowledge can be used in selecting a favorable course of action. In the absence of personal knowledge, the decision maker is forced to seek advice from those who are informed. This explains the rapid growth in the consulting business in education and other fields; (3) Experience - When an individual solves a problem in a particular way and the results are either poor or good, that experience provides him or her data to use in solving similar problems in future; (4) Analysis - Analytical techniques such as those used in rational policy decision making should supplement and not replace other ingredients of decision making. If mathematical methods for analyzing fail then intuition may be the only choice left; (5) Judgment - Judgment is needed to combine the facts,

knowledge, experience, and analysis to select the proper course of action. There is no substitute for good judgment (Moody, 1983).

The concept of problem solving, that is being described above is related to the issues of risk and uncertainty in decision making. According to the March-Simon version, the rational problem solver chooses from the maximum possible or the welfare function; in the risky case, he chooses from that alternative for which expected utility is greater; and in the case of uncertainty he chooses according to some such rule as "minimax risk" or "minimax regret".

According to Luce and Raiffa (1975) the distinction between risk and certainty is a conventional one. A decision maker faces risk if each action leads to one set of specific outcomes, each outcome occurring with a known probability; the decision maker faces uncertainty if any action leads to one set of specific outcomes, each outcome occurring with a known probability; the decision maker faces uncertainty if any action among alternatives contemplated has its consequences, a set of possible specific outcomes but where the probabilities of these outcomes are completely unknown or are even meaningful.

Under the conception of problem solving, ideal policy making, rational decision making, policy analysis, and

rational problem solving are synonymous. The ideal way to make policy is to choose among alternatives after careful and complete study of action and all possible consequences and after an evaluation of those consequences in the light of one's values. That is to say, ideally one treats policy as an intellectual problem.

Since this study is focusing on how curriculum decisions can be made using a decentralized decision making model the interactional analysis strategy is of particular interest. Perhaps the question one can raise at this juncture is Why interactive analysis? Because, in complex social problem solving people act on each other, action becomes interaction. In interaction people exert control over each other. They often do so without intending to and without awareness. Interactions themselves often solve problems; they set or make policy. Therefore, as problem solving and policy making processes, interactions constitute an alternative to analysis.

In bureaucratic institutions, the most frequent way to solve a governmental problem that no one has analyzed adequately is through a form of interaction called delegation. Delegation is a fine art of getting the job done at the optimum level, one which is more often than not at a much lower level that imagined (Cornell, 1980). The responsibility for making the decision is delegated to some designated official. Such an official may, of course, then

try to analyze the problem or may not. He/she may instead decide the issue according to some rule of thumb, indulge his/her prejudices thoughtlessly, or perhaps delegate the decision again to some one else. Whatever he does, the act of delegation produces a decision not dependent on analysis. Good delegation is exemplified when decision making is thrust downward to the lowest level of individual competence that includes willingness as well. Some official use delegation as a way of avoiding the consequences of decisions made by the organization.

The study of the National Institute of Education (Sproull, Weiner and Wold, 1978) found that in real decision making settings, indecision and avoidance of decision is functional. A decision not to make a decision even where a decision situation exists, is a decision in itself (Cornell, 1980).

It is known that most people in power try to delegate only innocuous decisions to their subordinates while reserving the important ones to their own decision making (Tversky, 1982). It is also known that in most social settings people postpone rather than make decisions. According to Tversky:

> ...this has the effect that problems are originally associated with those decisions eventually wander away to attach themselves to other more timely issues. That being the case, when the original decision is finally made, it solves nothing because there are no problems attached to it (1982:329).

Research addressing the question of whether interacting groups make better decisions, generate more creativity, or solve problems better than an equivalent number of individuals working alone has concluded that groups as a whole usually perform better than the average of individuals working alone, but seldom as well as the best individual effort of those working privately. Maier (1973) argues that groups present both assets and liabilities for individuals engaged in problem solving. Among the assets are a greater power of information available to each member, a richer stimulus context for triggering non-obvious associations and, a greater number of approaches available to the group. Individuals working alone often "get in a rut" working through the same sterile approaches over and over again. Finally, members are more likely to feel committed to a solution or decision thrashed through open forum. This has obvious merits during the implementation of curriculum decisions.

One of the features of participatory decision making is giving people the opportunity to discuss issues confronting them or the system. Writing on this topic, Bridges (1978) distinguishes three types of discussions each of which embodies different criteria for success. These are:

i. that the decision is as nearly as possible the right or correct one as judged on some objective grounds,

ii. that the decision can secure maximum agreement, support or assent of those involved, in other words, can secure a consensus of opinion,

iii. that the decision represents the victory or triumph of one's own point of point (more or less regardless of its merits) (Bridges, 1978:132-133).

In the first type of discussion, the participants use value free and open discussion as the means by which as much evidence, opinions and arguments as possible are brought to bear on the issue under consideration. The decision making process here resembles that which Lindblom calls 'synoptic policy making'. Bridges is skeptical about this type of discussion because very few actual instances of discussion or decision making match up to this description. One central feature of the second type of discussion is its pre-eminent concern to maximize and minimize disagreement. Bridges adds a cautionary note to this type of discussion by saying that group discussions which have the aim of achieving consensus can easily become oppressive of individuals and particularly those with divergent opinion.

Turban et al. (1980), have also noted this danger when discussing the team or inter-disciplinary approach to problem solving in management. Working as a committee, the team approach may suffer from potential defects and weaknesses of committees such as inefficiency, compromised decisions, lack of leadership, and poor communication. They also note that many problems are simple enough to be

handled by a single qualified researcher, especially one with inter-disciplinary training. Today's computer technology also helps the single qualified researcher to retrieve information about other disciplines, thus enabling even a person with minimal training in several disciplines to employ an inter-disciplinary approach.

Not all assets of group decision making may be realized because other group processes act as liabilities. For example, a few members may monopolize the discussion so that potential contribution of other members are not shared. Some members who have much to contribute may experience evaluation apprehension in a group setting; afraid of possible criticism and/or ridicule, they do not voice their ideas or win-lose psychology develops. Finally, a group setting presents the chance that purely social motives will take precedence over a hard headed task orientation. Much time may be spent in activities irrelevant to the task (Organ and Hamner (1982).

The ideal outcome of group decision making is for the group to reach a consensus on the course of action to take. Janis approximates consensus building to 'group think'. His central hypothesis summarizes this phenomenon:

> The more amicability and <u>espirit de corps</u>, there is among members of a policy-making in group, the greater the danger that independent critical thinking will be replaced by groupthink, which is likely to result in irrational and dehumanizing actions directed against outgroups (Janis, 1971:138).

Among the characteristic features of 'groupthink' Janis notes that:

> Victims apply direct pressure to any individual who momentarily expresses doubts about any group's shared illusions or who questions the validity of the arguments supporting a policy alternative favored by the majority. This (gambit) reinforces the concurrence-seeking norm that loyal members are expected to maintain (Janis,1971:89).

Janis also says that victims avoid deviating from group consensus; they keep silent about their misgivings and even minimize to themselves the importance of their doubts. In many societies, for example, the apathy among certain groups of people in participating in educational discussions that will shape their children's future is mainly as result of this phenomenon. In multi-ethnic African countries, group consensus is sometimes difficult to arrive because minority ethnic groups always think that whatever is arrived by group consensus always favors the majority ethnic group. Instead of striving to achieve consensus, they always work against it or work to subvert it. Conversely, what they may consider as an alternative policy decision, is usually opposed by the majority. The latter can, however, always implement their decisions because of their numerical superiority. The problem of ethnic bias manifests itself because people do not look at the issues under discussions independent of who they are as an ethnic group. They quickly take positions on issues based on the way it fits within the totality of their ethnicity.

Despite its weakness the consensus building approach is very important because it brings together people of different dispositions to agree on one common stand. Janis does not regard group think as an inevitable consequence of cohesion. From a careful study of policy-deliberating groups that avoided the dangers of unrestrained concurrence seeking, he recommends several measures for preventing group think. Groups should invite outside experts - individuals not susceptible to the 'we-feeling" of insiders - to present their views. At each session, the group should appoint one or more of its members to play the role of devils' advocate and challenge the assumptions voiced by the others. The leader of the group should studiously refrain from disclosing his or her own views and ideally, not attend some of the critical sessions to further remove inhibitions against expressing misgivings. Finally, after a decision has been reached, a "last chance" meeting should be held for anyone to express any residual doubts or uncertainties.

The last discussion procedure which perhaps can be better called debate, negotiation, argument or dialectic than discussion, concentrates on logic and dialectic and the pursuit of victory. One or all of those taking part are concerned to achieve a decision or policy in which their own opinion will triumph. This type of decision making is not favorable because characteristically, it

involves trials of strength, of personality, of position of personal authority; of sheer political or economic power, or of basic cunning powers of persuasion. In fact, at the extreme case this kind of negotiation turns into decision making process which Barry (1965) calls bargaining, that is, where agreement is reached on the basis and inducements which are wholly extrinsic to the merits of any argument. When involved in consensus building, people must focus on issues at hand and avoid being detracted from reaching consensus because of personal and other ulterior motives.

In all the above procedures, however, a problem arises when it is impractical to reach agreement. This may arise because there is no time or sufficient available evidence to follow an argument to a logical conclusion, or when a group finds it impossible to arrive at a consensus of opinion. To break this impasse ordinarily the group resorts to voting. Voting takes many forms: First, members may vote on the preferred alternatives and the alternative receiving the most votes wins. Should the winning alternative not receive half of the votes cast, the process is termed plurality; with over half of the votes, the process is one of absolute majority. Second, members may vote in pairs of alternatives with the winner in each pairing included in the subsequent pairing: the last remaining alternative is chosen (Robert's Rule of Order). Should the winning alternative beat all other alternatives

when paired with each of them, the process satisfies Condorcet's criterion for selection. Another variant of majority rule asks each voter to rank order the alternatives in line with their preferences; the groups choice is determined by differentially weighing each voter's first, second and third, etc. choices, adding up weights, and choosing the alternative with the largest sum. This procedure is technically known as Borda count.

A resort of voting in group decision making processes is really a sign of failure for discussion groups that have adopted the consensus procedure. In consensus building, for example, a policy or decision is arrived when the course of action can secure the support and assent of all those involved. But voting implies 'division' and division is quite the opposite of what the consensus seeker wants to promote.

There are, in reality practical limitations to discussion in decision making because circumstances require institutions to produce decisions with such urgency that no discussion is possible. If institutions were to insist that every issue or decision was subjected to the full process of deliberation by all members, this task would, according to Bridges, occupy 24 hours per day! One way of avoiding overloading the items for discussion is to determine priorities in terms of what the group discusses.

When seen from a hierarchical point of view Harrison (1975) notes that quality middle and upper management decisions are best made in groups while lower or operational decisions can be made individually because at this level, the decision making is typically computational or (procedural). This is more so when the organizations policy guidelines are made known to the members of the organization.

A system which contains a central decision making body which provides an opportunity for all to discuss and decide upon matters of principle and general concern, and smaller committees and working parties upon which those interested can discuss matters of limited concern, is an intelligent and of course a common place response to this need to determine priorities. In practice this breaks down if members of a community fail to order their priorities and insist either that all matters of detail are rehearsed in the central body as well as in the sub-committees. This is according to Bridges (1978) is where madness lie!

In general, there are merits in group discussion as a prelude to making decisions. The group has the advantages accrued from the pooling of a range of resources. As Aristotle argued:

> Each individual may indeed by a worse judge than the experts; but all when they meet together, are either better than the experts or at any rate no worse... (in Baker, 1952 Ed. BK.III:49)

The group has the advantage of suggestions put forward from different imagination and of different perspectives upon proposed courses of action. A virtue of a committee or other group meeting discussing educational policy or decisions is that it affords an opportunity for the development and mutual adjustment of opinions and/or interest at a more complex and rapid rate than a single mind. It would, however, be fallacious to infer from this that a decision making process which employed discussion was ipso facto a democratic one.

Decisions are taken democratically not only in virtue of how they are taken but of who takes them. A group of 'Senior Staff' in a school may value and exploit the possibilities of group discussion in their own decision making but that decision making remains oligarchic; it becomes democratic as full participation in discussion becomes more extensive.

Again, schools just like any organization use group discussion as a facade for making individual decisions. The following two cases illustrate this phenomenon. Take for example, a school staff meeting where the head listens carefully and sympathetically to the discussion, thanks the meeting for airing the issue under discussion, and then goes to his/her office to decide what is to be done. In the second case, the head of the school again encourages staff to discuss the issue but this time the discussion has

the point not merely of advising the head but of generating a decision through the compelling conclusion of the evidence and argument, through general consensus of opinion or if they fail, through majority vote. Much disillusionment in Curriculum committees and Staff meetings is that decision making operates on the former level.

In political context, the differences between these cases is according to Bridges:

> "the difference between a form of benevolent and intelligent paternalism [or maternalism] and something which has the conviction of a thorough going democracy" (Bridges, 1978:155).

Certain decisions in curriculum are political and such matters enter upon value judgments, upon which it might be maintained that no man's opinion can claim rational superiority over another, or upon what may amount to the same thing, an assessment of people's interests where the individual is himself the best authority.

On this argument one might acknowledge grudgingly and privately perhaps that, yes, in the final analysis some people might be better equipped than others to make political (curriculum) decisions and such people could on the whole be relied upon to make wiser, better or more rational decisions. However, there are good reasons, nevertheless, for acting as if this was not the case.

Another argument in favor of group discussion is the "educative merit". Here, the merits are rooted in the value which lies in such participation for the moral, political and intellectual development of those engaged. On this Parry (1972), says that participation is part of a process of political and moral education. It stretches the individual forcing him to develop his latent qualities.

It can be argued that if organizations cannot intervene in group decision making, then the negatives that have been levelled against this type of decision may occur. According to Guzzo (1982), interventions to improve group decision making can be regarded as being of two types on the basis of their primary target: the action or inputs to group decision making. The first type has its target direct changes in the behavior of decision making group members. The changes could be brought about by the creation of new patterns of social interactions, or by the estimation of specific procedures of task accomplishment. Thus:

> ...such interventions can affect either or both the social-psychological influences residing in a group and the processes of manipulating and utilizing information (Guzzo, 1982:5).

A number of ways have been proposed in literature and adopted in organizations. Those that have had some impact are the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) (Van de Ven and

Delbecq, 1974, Hegarty, 1977, O'neal, 1981), the Delphi Technique (Dalkey, 1969) and the Brain Storming technique.

The Nominal Group Technique has become popular with curriculum consultants. The technique takes as a starting point the premise that those involved in a particular situation known what they think or want as individuals, but do not necessarily know what other participants think or want. So the opinions and desires, wishes or suggestions of the group need to be shared and organized and, on the basis of such shared knowledge, decisions can be made through the democratic process of clarification and voting. Nominal Group Technique is used because of its growing reputation for (1) encouraging innovative proposals, (2) avoiding political manipulation or conflict which may result in stalement, and (3) arriving at choices based on needs of the individual preferences of group members. The NGT process includes the following steps: (1) individuals independently list possible alternative goals or solutions to a problem, (2) each alternative is presented in turn around the group until each person has exhausted his or her list, (3) any alternative may be clarified but no lobbying for and against an alternative is allowed, (4) each participant independently ranks the set of alternatives, and (5) the priority of the alternatives is established through some form of voting or mathematical pooling of individual rankings.

Another aggregative technique used in decision making is the Delphi technique. The Delphi technique uses panel of experts or selected participants who typically never meet face to face, but who report their individual preferences among proposals. Preferences from one round of questioning are aggregated and fed back to the members for re-ranking. This continues for several rounds until some trend or consensus is observed. The interaction of the participants as a group is limited to responding to the aggregated rankings from the prior round of responses. Unlike in interactive decision making processes, direct negotiation of compromises is not possible.

Three claims are made in literature regarding the advantages of these aggregative techniques. First, the techniques are said to generate more innovating alternatives in contrast to the more conventional interactive decision processes (Hart, et al, 1985; Casey et al, 1984, Delbecq, Van de Ven, and Gustavson, 1975). Second, the technique emphasizes equal participation by all members, and this ensures the groups commitment to the results and therefore, the support needed for successful implementation (Van de Ven, 1974; Miner, 1979). Third, the techniques are said to provide a good means of generating consensus (Mackett, 1985). However, Rohrbaugh (1983) argues that consensus arises from the opportunity to explore reasons for differences in an interactive context.

So, while advocates of aggregative choice techniques view conflict with suspicion, proponents of interactive decision making see interaction and conflict as creating the dynamic for uncovering assumptions which may lead to the synthesis of proposals or the discovery of new alternatives (Schweiger, Sandberg, and Ragan, 1986).

Advocates of NGT also recommend it as way of structuring the deliberations of a group. But as a deliberative procedure, O'neal (1981) sees it as fraught with some serious shortcomings:

> The technique intentionally excludes interaction in the form of discussion and debate of issues from the problem identification phase of deliberation in name only, hence the descriptor is 'normal' (in Bonser and Grundy, 1988:36).

Bonser and Grundy (1988) describe technique such as NGT as means-ends oriented, that is the outcome of the process, the list of action priorities, is more important than the understandings of the participants. Such approaches to curriculum decision making are informed by what Habermas has called the "technical cognitive interest." They take power to initiate away from practitioners. Bonser and Grundy argue that:

> A more authentically deliberative approach to curriculum decision making appears to be one which regards deliberation as a self-formative process, that is, a process which develops out of the discourse of the participants (1988:37).

Input-oriented interventions, the second type of group interventions, also seeks to change behavior in groups, but they attempt to do this indirectly rather than directly. Inputs to group decision include the distribution of abilities and vested interests among group members, the nature of available information, group size, the reward structure under which a group exists, and time pressure for decision making. In this way:

> ...it is possible to intervene to arrange inputs and circumstances such that effective decision making will be more likely, without explicitly specifying new patterns of behavior (Guzzo, 1982:5).

Mahler (1987), conducted an experimental research to investigate the claims made for the nominal grouping technique about participation and commitment. In this experiment Mahler used graduate students majoring in Political Science and Public Administration. A classroom setting was used in order to compare the perceptions of the interactive and the NGT decision processes. In this study, Mahler found that interactive group members showed a significantly greater sense of participation than NGT members. This may have been due, he argues, to the limitations on discussion and debate imposed by NGT. This finding lends support to the thesis that the sense of participation depends not just on the generation of ideas but on the process of discussion, debate and negotiation

through which ideas are synthesized and that each member can help shape the final choice.

Mahler's finding complements research by Hart et al (1985) that group processes are necessary for the synthesis of ideas and Rohrbaugh's argument about the importance of feedback in interacting groups. All this is not to suggest that NGT and other structured decision making techniques do not have a place in public decision making. It does, however, suggest that it is important to thoroughly study the problems and conditions under which these techniques can be used.

The Delphi technique is probably most useful in areas where there is greatest premium on intuition and qualitative judgment. Group processes like the suppression of dissent, the bandwagon effect, pressure of premature disclosure, etc. are likely to be most damaging to the subtler, and less formalized aspects of decision making. It is also possible to use both the structured and interactive techniques when making major choices in education. In this way, the strengths of each technique can enhance the quality of the decisions made and the commitment to these decisions by the public during implementation.

Explicating their view on group size, Organ and Hamner (1982) say that the number of individuals in a group can determine the activity levels of individuals within the

group. The larger the group, the less intimate relationships become. The appropriate size of a group depends on the group's situation and purpose. Sargent and Williams (in Kolasa, 1969) found that a fact finding group is probably most effective when it is composed of about fourteen members, while an executive or action group functions best at a size approximately seven members. According to Kolasa the validity of these figures is reinforced by information from many legislative bodies with a long tradition group decision making.

Berelson and Steiner (1964) have looked into group size from an odd-even perspective. In their study, they found that even-numbered groups show more disagreement than do odd-numbered groups because in even numbered groups, sub-groups of equal size can be pitted against each other. They also found that the perfect group size is five because if sub-groups develop in a group of five, a minority of two is large enough to permit participation and individual development in support of a position, and majority of three is strong enough to prevail, yet is not completely overwhelming.

In line with Newcombe's theory of interpersonal attraction, similarity of group members on certain psychological dimensions promotes cohesiveness. Not all dimension of similarity, however, are equally important. Commonly held values seem to represent the most critical

factors. For example, ethnicity frequently has served as a basic for work group cohesion. In America, for example workers conscious of their Italian, Polish, Jewish or transplanted Appalachian heritage coalesce around shared values concerning religion, the family, the meaning of work, and tradition. The same can also be applied in ethnic diverse countries like Malawi. Cohesiveness in groups, however, can have both and negative effects. For example, in a multi-ethnic nation a group composed of a preponderant ethnic group can make decisions that are beneficial to that group and harmful to other groups. This cannot be tolerated in a democracy and is, therefore, an example of negatives forces found in cohesive groups. The best intervention here is to make sure that the ethnic composition of the group is as diverse and as representative as possible. Where decisions being made are say made at a local level where the ethnic composition in that community is homogeneous, then cohesiveness in this case is positive. Decision making will be enhanced by this cohesion and the impact of the decisions made, it is assumed, will not have discriminatory effects from the perspective of ethnicity. When homogeneity is seen from the dimension of sex, age, or educational attainment, Seashore (1954) found that it is not seen to be a critical for group cohesion.

Groups like individuals age. Pelz and Andrews (1966) studying groups in research and development found: (1) Scientific contribution declined with group age. (2) Usefulness (not to be confused with creativity) to the organization peaked at 4 or 5 years of group age and then declined. (3) Older groups were more relaxed, less secretive and more specialized than younger groups. (4) If older groups maintained their interaction with others and kept up intellectually, then they also retained their vitality. It should be noted, however, that not all relationships are monotonic with age. This data suggest, therefore, that managers or administrators keep group age in mind as they make or remake their groups, focusing on relationship that will maintain group vitality.

As stated earlier, a decision made without implementation is merely an interesting abstraction. It is during the implementation phase that the choice moves from the intellectual realm to commitment of time, energy and resources. Successful decisions are more than good decisions. Once made, the choice must be implemented efficiently so that its effect may be obtained in such a way as to satisfy the original objective. A decision of good quality may be offset by poor acceptance.

The most comprehensive model for applying the success of a given decision was developed by Samuel Trull. According to Trull (1966), decision success is a function of decision quality and decision implementation. Decision

quality in turn is composed of: (1) compatibility with existing operating constraints, (2) nearness to optimum time for the decision (3) proximity to the optimum amount of information, and (4) the decision maker's influence on the decision. Decision implementation is a product of: (1) avoidance of conflict of interest, (2) a risk reward factor, and (3) the degree of understanding by those who carry out the decision. In his study, Trull found that the degree of understanding shown by those who were required to carry out the decision was commensurate with openness of communication and the participation of such individuals in the decision making process. Perceived involvement was important to decision success.

On compatibility with existing operating constraints, it is important to reiterate here that decision makers must remain cognizant of the current and emerging legislation that can influence the process of choice. They must remain alert to the changes in political sentiment that can negate the successful outcome of choices, no matter how thoughtfully made.

Organizations do not exist in a vacuum. They are part of larger aggregates, such as the economic system, the social system, and the political system of a nation. Therefore, decision makers must take into account of the inputs of the environment in arriving at a decision, and they must consider the effects of that choice on the

manifold forces comprising the environment (Harrison, 1975).

The importance of the human being during the implementation phase is enunciated clearly by Elbing (1970) in the following passage:

> Man as the vehicle through which the decisions are implemented reacts not only to the quality of the decision but to the total socio-technical environment associated with the decision. He cannot be manipulated in the same sense as other resources can be. Therefore, the manager's job is not limited to the exercise of knowledge and skill required to transform those solutions into the dynamics of behavior in a particular organizational social systems (1970:322).

The Relationship Between Information, Communication, and Decision Making

Educational policy today could be conceived of as attempting to do either two things (or a combination thereof): To change some part of the system (e.g. to increase participation of parents in school governance) and/or to adopt to overriding circumstances that occurred somewhere else in the system (e.g. to introduce new content in a subject or introducing new subject in the curriculum following parental pressure).

According to Scharopoulos (1980) the cases referred above require particular kinds of information. To change a system presupposes knowledge of how it functions. The information referred to here is technically known as "supply response". This information is technically known

as "supply response", that is, factors affecting the individual or group demands for education. This information overlaps to a great extent with the information demand at technocratic level. For the objective of economic growth, the curriculum planner must have good knowledge of the links between the content of education and the economic system.

Another component of information which is very crucial for the articulation of bottom-up decision making is one flowing from the planner to the public. Typically the kind of information provided by the planning authority to students and their families so that they can make more informed decisions before expressing a 'social demand' for particular kinds or levels of education. This function of educational information flowing from the planner towards the public becomes increasingly important and comes under

the label of 'self-selection' or 'professional orientation' (Psacharopoulos, 1980).

In real organizational situations there exist information gaps which exist when communicating the 'supply response' or the 'social demand' information. Among the many causes of the information gaps is the educational decision maker's lack of awareness of existing information that might help in the making of a decision. Psacharopoulos (1980) has argued that this primary

information gap is due to inadequate dissemination of existing ideas or data rather than the lack of new statistics. Political decisions on the curriculum, for example, sometimes are not made with back up information. The technocrat who advises the decision maker might not him/herself be informed of existing research results that might affect his/her recommendation. The reason for this is that there still exists in many educational systems today a great distance between the producers of educational information (the academic research community, teachers, parents and students themselves) and the users (politicians, administrators and their advisors).

There is basically very little communication between the users and producers. No better example can be made to illustrate this than the lack of communication that exists between the academic community and administrators. Research results produced by the academic community are either not well explained in an understanding way to administrators or they are dismissed as 'academic exercise'. While it is true in certain cases that the academic research community produce 'academic exercises', there exists, on the other hand solid pieces of information that continue to be ignored by educational planners.

There is also information flow lacunae in bottom-up, region to center, North to South and between one developing country and another. At system level, this deprives the

center of important feedback data about the success of the implementation of decisions previously made, and of the problems confronting the system. At inter-system level, it deprives one system learning from the other's educational experiences. This is real when one considers that the problems that Malawi, for example, is facing now was faced by say India a decade ago. As regards the information flowing from the developed North and the developing South, the latter has lamented of the actual inadequate information flow and at the same time of its inappropriateness. In order to make sure that the information exchange between countries is useful, collaboration between North and South research community has been advocated by many researchers and organizations.

In the discussion of group decision making, it was mentioned that consensus among group members is important. Consensus results from interaction, which in turn is the product of open communication. Therefore, it seems obvious that, however defined, group effectiveness is directly or indirectly dependent upon open communication. Communication within groups may be classified according to two inter-related dimensions: (1) the directional flow of information, that is one way, two way, or multi-directional; and (2) the structure of the network through which the information flows. As has been argued in this study, centralized decision making systems have a

preponderant one-way (top-down) directional flow of information while decentralized systems tend to use a two-way and multi-directional information flow.

Regarding the structure of communication network, Costello and associates (1963) list three primary structures that determine the structure of communication networks in groups: (1) the formal organization with its superior-subordinate reporting relationships; (2) the information organization with its unstructured interpersonal relationships oriented towards task accomplishment; and (3) the media used to transmit the information between and among the members. Other less significant factors in determining group communication networks, include: (1) social status considerations like age, education, and common background, (2) known similarities in points of view, and (3) personal friendships.

Research studies by Bavelas and others have revealed four basic types of communication networks: (1) the wheel network, (2) the chain network, (3) the circle network, and (4) the all channel network (Figure 2.2).

The wheel network, is considered the more structured and hierarchical of the group communication networks. Generally speaking, the wheel network, which is prevalent in many centralized systems is unsatisfying to members on the periphery of the organization (Leavitt, 1951 and

Guetzkin, 1960). However, it is highly efficient in making decisions of a routine nature. The chain network is next to the wheel in its degree of centrality and its consequent inequality in communication among the members.

The chain network has a special feature and this is the presence of relay personnel who transmit information from the center to both ends of the chain. It is the argument in this study that these relay personnel sometimes distort information as it flows from the top to bottom and vice-versa. The chain network is highly unsatisfying to the 'end men', somewhat more satisfying to the relay men, and most satisfying to the people occupying central organizational positions.

In contrast to both the wheel and the chain network is the circle network. Members in a circle network typically follow a decision making procedure in which information is passed around by all members, and each person acts as his own decision making center. This structure gives every member an equal opportunity for communication. In a study of wheel and circle networks, Cohen (1962) found that circle members were more satisfied with their roles than peripheral members of wheel networks. On the other hand, it may take more time to transmit information through the circle network, largely because of the expanded number of linkages.

In the all channel network, groups make decisions by having members communicate information to all directly, each member forming his/her ideas and tentative alternatives. This network is least restrictive and therefore, affords the greatest amount of personal satisfaction to the members. Like the circle, however, because of its large number of linkages, the all channel network, takes more time to convey information and allows greater opportunity for misconception and distortion of the original transmittal. Also, like the circle, this network is best for decisions that are non-routine and non-recurring with a good deal of uncertainty associated with the outcome (category II decisions) (Figure. 2.1).

Summarizing the findings on the above communication network structures, Costello and Zalkind (1963) found that highly centralized networks such as the wheel and the chain have the following principal characteristics:

1. They facilitate efficient making of routing and recurring decisions.
2. They strengthen the leadership position of the member(s) most central.
3. They result in a quickly stabilized set of among the members.
4. They produce lower levels of members satisfaction (1963:457).

Networks low in centralization, such as the circle and the completely connected network, may be characterized in the following ways:

1. They produce higher levels of member satisfaction.
2. They facilitate the making of non-routine and non-recurring decisions.
3. They were more likely to be responsive to innovative and creative solutions (Costello and Zalkind, 1963:457).

Since effective decision making requires accurate information, satisfaction among all members of the organization in order to guarantee successful implementation of decisions, and an environment responsive to innovative and creative solutions, a blending centralized and decentralized communication network is required. What this means then for centralized decision making systems, is the development of a two-way and multi-directional communication system that is centrally managed. The latter is important in that it would lessen communication disorder and inefficiency associated with decentralized systems.

Curriculum Planning Process

Introduction

Before an attempt is made to look at the process of curriculum planning and decision making a review of the various meanings people attach to the term "curriculum" is necessary because the way curriculum is conceptualized affects the way it planned, developed and implemented in

the schools. It also can predetermine who is to participate in curriculum decision making.

The Meaning of Curriculum.

The range of meanings given to the concept "curriculum" has been one of the sources of confusion in Curriculum Studies. Many people, teachers and laymen alike, have looked at curriculum narrowly and loosely. A review of some of the conceptions of curriculum will be made. These definitions will be related to the 3 dimensions of curriculum which in this paper will be referred to as: (a) the formal, (b) the hidden, and (c) the emergent. Finally a multi-dimensional definition of curriculum will be proposed.

A traditionalist conception of curriculum is "a course of study or subject matter content" set out by the institution for students to cover. This is a very limiting definition and is subject-centered. The meaning it conveys fits in the formal dimension - the "planned for" and structured part of the curriculum where objectives and knowledge are predetermined. An extension to the above definition is looking slightly beyond the course of study and viewing the curriculum as "intended learning experiences" that are predetermined in the objectives and by implication, excluding all other learning experiences offered by the school environment. This conception is

associated squarely with the formal dimension, and since it precludes other learning experiences, it is insufficient.

Another view has been that of looking at curriculum as "all experiences a learner has under the guidance of the school." This definition differs from the traditional approach in that it does not only consider subject matter and intended learning outcomes, but that everything that influences the learner must be considered during the process of curriculum making. This definition partly lies in the hidden dimension and partly in the emergent dimension because it recognizes the fact that there are experiences that take place and/or emerge inside and outside the classroom that are unplanned and hence usually go unnoticed by the teacher and may not be immediately felt by the learner. These experiences have been commonly referred to as the "hidden curriculum." There is no tacit agreement as to what the "hidden curriculum." We can, however, assume that the hidden curriculum embodies all educative experiences within the school not explicitly included in the official or overt curriculum. Thus the physical and social milieu of the school, etc. influence what and how the student learn. In addition, the hidden curriculum also exist outside the school in various non-school settings.

In trying to come to grips with this "hidden phenomena" Hargreaves (1967) suggests the term "para

curriculum to mean that which is learned alongside the formal curriculum. Hargreaves, sees the para curriculum as focussed on two aspects: internal and external. The "internal" aspect is essentially social-psychological and concentrates upon how members of an institution particularly those with little or no formal power, for example, students adapt to relatively unnoticed constraints of the institution. The claim made here is that members must learn to conform to the internal modus operandi of an institution if they are to succeed, and perhaps merely to survive in an organization.

Dreeben (1967), has a similar view of the hidden dimension; he looks at it as what is learned in school as a function of the social structure of the classroom and of the teacher's exercise of authority. The student must learn to live with authority in order to succeed. In Life in Classroom, Jackson, (1983) summarizes three central characteristics of school life: the crowd, the praise, and the power. Learning to live in the classroom means, first, learning to live in and to be treated as a member of a crowd of the same age and status as others. Second, learning to live in classroom means learning to live in a world in which there is impersonal authority, where a relative stranger orders and wields power. Here, one sees a negative interaction between the formal and the hidden curriculum in as far as the promotion of creativity,

democracy and the liberation of ideas and actions on the part of the learner.

The writer is of the opinion that when it comes to considering the implications of this aspect of the hidden curriculum, instead of emphasizing on how the students must conform to the organizational structure of the school, curriculum workers and school administrators must also address the important question of how the school as an organization must be aware of these social-psychological constraints and respond to them in a way that will result in a positive interaction between formal and the internal aspect of the para curriculum from the vantage point of the learner. Writing on American education, Giroux (1978) has suggested that the hidden curriculum should be more consistent with the ideals of the formal curriculum. He recommends schools in America to do away with those properties of the hidden curriculum that are associated with alienation - rigid time schedules, tracking, control through tests, fragmentation in content, and competition.

Gordon (1957) sees the hidden curriculum as an important bridge between the socialization and preparation for adult membership in society, in other words, the continuation of the informal education the learner receives at home. Writing on this sociological dimension, he says that the individual behavior of high school students is related to their status and their roles in school.

Further, he understood that the informal system is a sub-system within the community and the larger complex of American society. In his study of the high school, Gordon found that students were involved in three "sub-systems": (1) the formal scheme, curriculum textbooks, classroom; (2) a semi-formal set of clubs and activities, (conventionally called "extra curricular activities), and (3) the informal half world of unrecognized cliques, factions and other groups. The latter sub-system, he found out, controlled much of adolescent behavior in school achievement and in social conduct such as dating. Like Giroux, Gordon believes that teachers with the backing of principals, must recognize the expectations set by the informal system and integrate them with the formal system.

Admittedly, new trends in the informal structure prevail today. Today's students are more concerned with self identity than with status and conformity. Accordingly, these characteristics have the following implications for curriculum: (1) Students would be unlikely to respond favorably to prescribed topics and methods that feature competitive achievement and dependence on teacher authority. Hence, cooperative methods and self selection would be in order. (2) The values being promoted by popular figures must be examined through the curriculum. (3) More attention must be given to ways in which to evolve a value system and to judge the relative strength of

systems (McNeil, 1981). The implications of this trend means that students should be involved in decision making in schools.

Ormell, (1976) in trying to unravel the hidden dimension advances two kinds of curricula. First, there is a set of things a student learns from other students at school which are not part of the official curriculum. Second, there is a set of things a student learns through his or her experiences with the teacher which are not consciously intended. A hidden curriculum of the first kind would be set of techniques for picking pockets. A hidden curriculum of the second kind is alleged when people claim that some functional approaches used in modern Biology teach an attitude of brutality towards living things. To define curriculum therefore, as "all the experiences a learner has under the guidance of teachers", includes both desirable and undesirable learning experiences. This is in essence the limitation of this definition.

The last view of the curriculum is looking at it from the perception of the learner. This is a definition in line with the student-centered curriculum. The emphasis on the perceptions of the learner regarding what should be learned and what has been learned, is normally dictated by his/her needs and the external conditions (planned and unplanned) in the environment to which he/she can react.

this view of the curriculum lies in the emergent dimension of curriculum. This dimension refers to ongoing alterations that are made in the formal and hidden curriculum in order to take care of learning opportunities which constantly occur in a school. The emerging dimension is supposed to underplay, whenever felt or noticed, the dissonance that frequently arises between formal and hidden or unexpected outcomes of the institution and those perceived by the learner. Sinclair and Ghory (1981) describe the emergent dimension more succinctly:

> [It] includes the ongoing alterations, adjustments, and additions that are made to insure harmony between the uniqueness of the individual child and the character of the curriculum. The "emergent", then, serves as a correcting measure, smoothing out and putting the expressed and implied parts of the curriculum in line with each other and with children (Sinclair and Ghory, 1981).

The justification of looking at curriculum development as a dynamic process lies in this dimension.

The meanings of curriculum cited above, and their related dimensions should be seen holistically and not discretely. Each should be seen as an important element in our quest to providing systematic and practical ways of planning and designing a school curriculum. Graphically, the relationship between the dimensions and the curriculum definitions can be seen on a linear thread that connects two extreme views: the Subject-centered and the Learner-

environment and that each has a role to play in shaping the student. The formal, hidden and emerging dimensions all interact with each other and with the school environment creating what one would call "a total learning environment". This is in line with Sinclair and Ghory's view of the curriculum as environments in which children learn and grow.

One obvious implication of seeing the three dimensions discretely is that the absence or dominance of one dimension may create learning gaps in the curriculum. For example, if the curriculum is viewed narrowly as a domain of knowledge to be transmitted to the (passive) learner, without taking into consideration individual needs, interest and perceptions of the learner - factors covered by the hidden and emerging dimension - then, the curriculum is bound to fail in achieving its purpose of producing a balanced individual; a characteristic needed in a world that is multidimensional in outlook.

Since the definition of curriculum determines how people conceptualize and plan their educational programs, and how they put them into practice, it is imperative to offer a definition that will encompass the three curriculum dimensions discussed above. So, while not losing sight of other encompassing views of curriculum, in this study the term curriculum will mean: the planned, individual and group learning experiences, knowledge and skills offered by

the total school environment, for the learner's physical, emotional and intellectual growth.

Conceptual Bases for Curriculum Planning

Many writers in Curriculum Studies have come up with models and rationales for curriculum design which have helped Curriculum specialists, teachers and administrators to conceptualize and develop curricula. In order to review the ideas and principles of curriculum planning presented by the various scholars in the field, this study is going to use the four central decision questions that Ralph Tyler posed in his rationale, as a framework for discussing the curriculum planning process:

1. What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experience can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (1949:1).

The questions raised by Tyler above have in principle, been raised by other curriculum scholars before him like Charters, Bobbitt and Rugg, and have been raised and expanded by other scholars like Taba (1962), Goodlad

(1966), and Beauchamp (1975), just to mention a few. Tyler's questions address the four main components of curriculum: Aims and Goals, Content, Method and Evaluation. Commenting on these cardinal elements of curriculum Thompson (1975) referred to them by using the terms "Why, What, How and Whether".

In this section, therefore, the writer is going to review what scholars have said with respect to the curriculum components addressed by these questions. In other words, Tyler's four questions will provide a framework for analyzing and synthesizing ideas, principles and practicalities of curriculum planning, and for relating them to other subsequent issues in curriculum. By doing this, it is hoped that important insights will be gained into the process of making curriculum decisions.

In trying to answer the first question: What educational purposes should the school seek to attain? Tyler recommends that three main sources be used for identifying objectives - the learner, the society and subject matter. Tyler states that the learner's needs and interests should be identified. Recent writing on the topic of needs assessment, has defined a need as a discrepancy or gap between the way things "are" and the way things "ought to be". In schools the "ought to be" is the ideal expectation and should be established by public consensus, and expressed in terms of what students should

be learning and how well. In other words, it is a condition regarded as desirable for the individual to attain. Tyler suggests that information of this nature can be obtained through interviews, observation, tests and questionnaires. So far, needs have been looked at from an external point of view in that the curriculum specialist analyzes data collected about the learners.

Educational objectives can also be derived by analyzing the basic needs of an individual. Several writers on humanistic psychology, have provided important frameworks for understanding and analyzing human needs. Prescott (1954), Maslow (1968) and Rogers (1969, 1985) are among the notable humanistic psychologists whose ideas have been widely applied in education and other human social service sectors.

Prescott (1954) sees needs as falling into three major categories:

1. Physiological, relating to the physical demands experienced by the individual, for example, the need for food, activity, rest, sex, etc.
2. Social - the need to establishing and maintaining satisfactory relationships with other persons, for example, the cultivation of affection and a sense of belongingness.
3. Ego or integrating need - the need to relate oneself to something, larger.

Maslow (1968), agrees with Prescott, and his needs assessment can be graphically illustrated in a pyramidal structure (Figure 2.3). Basically, Maslow's human needs start from the more physical to the social and intellectual. The argument here is that a hungry man has not time to think about intellectual pursuits. This assertion is backed by evolutionary theory of human being which claims that it was only when human beings became self sufficient in food, water and shelter, and protected themselves from physical danger, that they become more interested in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding of their environment and the universe. However, this assertion has limitations. Today, many people are suffering from want of food, water and shelter and to say to these people that they should concentrate on their physical needs and not the other needs is wrong because it is through the attainment of self esteem and actualization, and through the pursuit of knowledge, that their fatalistic and poverty stricken conditions can be overcome. Therefore, Maslow's somewhat hierarchical needs must be seen as interacting and cyclical.

Rogers (1969, 1985) sees the whole issue of meeting the needs of the student from the vantage point of the teacher. The message one gets from this approach is that teachers can facilitate the meeting of human needs by

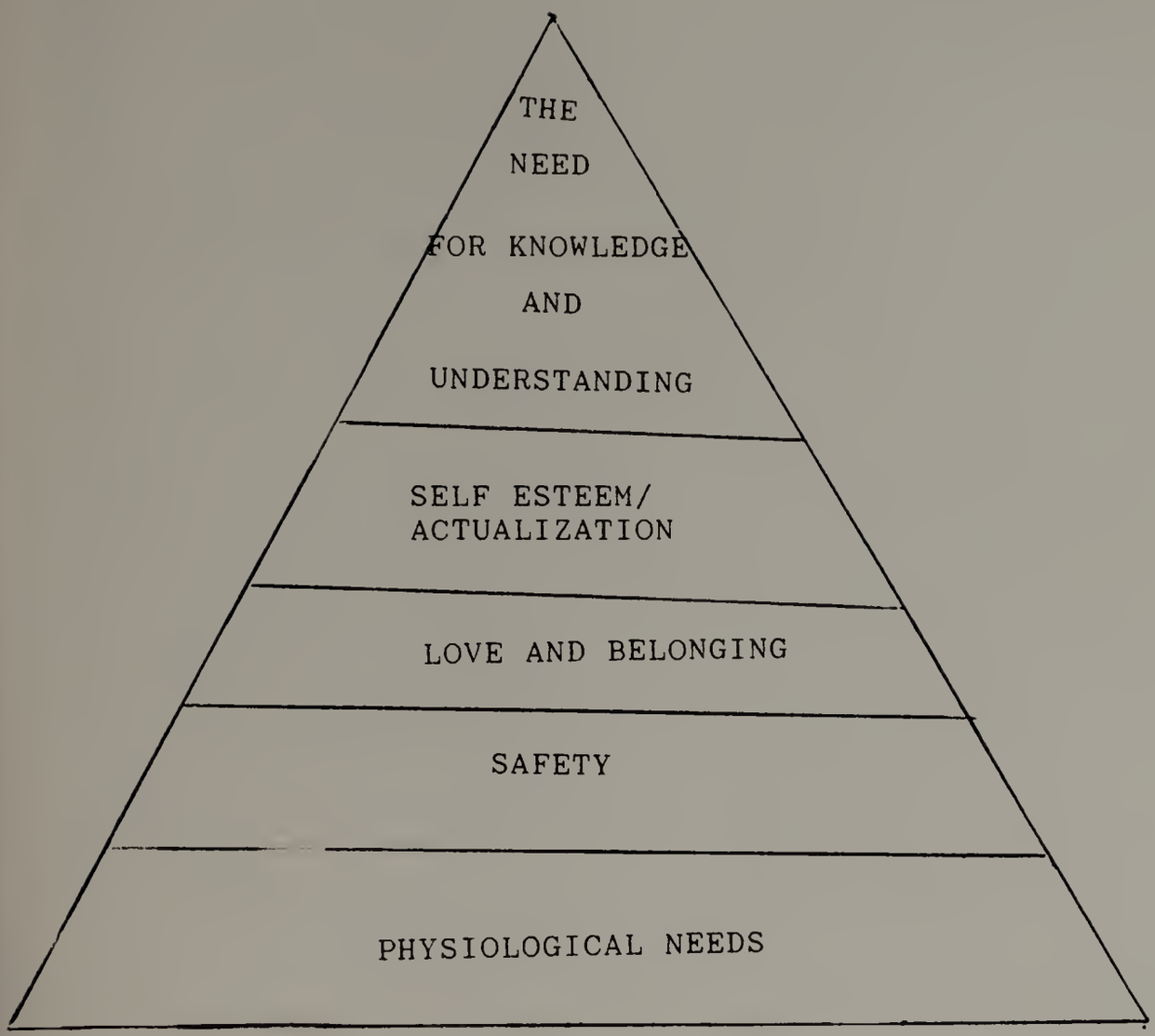

Figure 2.3: Maslow's Needs of a Human Being

possessing the following qualities: genuineness, regard, and empathy. Genuiness, is capacity to be in tune with or congruent with one's own feelings and concerns. It means not putting on a facade when dealing with students on issues that deal with feelings and emotions. The teacher must accept feelings and deals with them at a conscious level.

Regard, is the teachers' ability to convey respect for the individual student and his or her potential for growth, including respect for student's right to make decisions affecting his or her growth. This statement is in congruence with the argument for student participation in decision making. Many teachers and administrators fear that in expressing regard they lose authority. But Rogers states that the ability to convey respect for the student does not involve relinquishing authority, but means that the teacher conveys a sense of respect for the student's concern, feelings, and values.

Empathy, is the teacher's ability to understanding the student's perceptions and to convey that understanding. This has implications for the individual's need for growth. If the teacher is not aware of the student's perspective, his/her growth will be thwarted. Another important aspect of Rogers' work is his development of the concept of self-directed learning. This approach is often associated with the humanistic school of thought. His hypothesis is that:

> individuals have within themselves vast resources for self understanding and for altering their self-concepts, basic attitudes, and self directed behavior; these resources can be tapped if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided (Rogers, 1980:122

The interpretation of Rogers' ideas should not only be directed at the teacher as he/she interacts with the students, but should also be seen from the point of view of the process behind affective education. Once students associate with teachers with such qualities, they also cultivate these qualities and transfer them beyond the school as they interact with people in the larger society.

The curriculum designer is not omniscient, and a unilateral needs assessment may seriously misjudge the needs of the learners and may be a projection of the designer's own needs. One of Maslow's many contributions to the study of human needs was to point to the essential subjectivity of people's thinking on the subject:

> For our chronically and extremely hungry man, Utopia can be simply as a place where there is plenty of food. He tends to think that, if only he is guaranteed food for the rest of his life, he will be perfectly happy and will never want anything more. Life itself tends to be defined in terms of eating. Anything else will be defined as unimportant (Maslow, 1968:18).

While the hungry person is biased in his assessment of his/her needs, Maslow observed that the well fed person

is also biased in his/her assessment of his/her own and other people's need for food. This principle, that an individual cannot by himself accurately assess the needs of other people, is illuminating.

In addition, when analyzing the needs of the learner, we should beware of too quickly concluding that any performance gap observed may be solved by education or training along. Often a change elsewhere in society itself or in how one of the other institutions operate would close an apparent gap. For example, the society's health needs may not be fulfilled or solved by teaching students the rudiments of nutrition in class but in providing the people with the necessary infrastructure and funds to improve agricultural production, and the preparation of balanced meals in the homes. In the case of Malawi, these responsibilities would fall in the hands of the Ministries of Agriculture, and Community Services. Nevertheless, looking at the problem more closely, an integrative and multi-disciplinary approach would be necessary to bridge this "need" gap. Hence, the need for government institutions - Education, Health, Agriculture, Community Services, - to work hand in hand when formulating and operationalizing national goals.

The study of contemporary life both in the local community, and in society in general is the second source for deriving educational objectives. To do this, Tyler

suggests that first, we classify life into various categories, such as religion, vocation, recreation, family, health, and consumption, and then develop a list of objectives relevant to each of these areas. While it is inadequate to assert that the needs of the learner alone must determine the curriculum, the exclusive emphasis on the needs of society can lead to a situation in which the private needs must be sacrificed to the good of the community or country. In some countries this is national policy. The preamble to the 1961 Education Act in Hungary states:

1. The development of the education system must be determined by the needs of the socialist society.
2. The system must be uniform in its organization and aims.
3. The responsibility for providing and maintaining the educational services belongs exclusively to the state (Richmond, 1971:97).

Hungary, has undergone some drastic social, political and economic changes. It is possible that this is no longer the country's guiding philosophy in education now. Nevertheless, it serves as an example of how education is seen in prevailing socialist and communist systems.

The danger of conceiving society as a metaphysical entity with needs of its own, is that the argument can easily become a smoke screen behind which the most powerful

section of the society, through the control of education, arbitrarily converts its idealogy and interests into curriculum policy. This danger is real when the determination of the needs of the society is not made democratically by public consensus. Arthur Foshay, comments of the American schools that:

> the single minded pursuit of social needs has led the school to practice a social class bias that has excluded millions of students from education at an early age... When schools do more than reflect society needs they become enormous screens devices (Foshay, 1970:3).

An effective curriculum design should, nonetheless, address both societal and learners' needs. An overlap of needs is bound to occur since the learners' needs are in part a reflection of societal needs. The maximization this "overlap area" (Figure 2.4), as a source of goals and content of a curriculum can act as one way of meeting the needs of an egalitarian and democratic society. Schwab (1969) sees the importance of addressing both individual and societal needs when he says:

> A curriculum based on theory about individual personality, which thrusts society, its demands and its structure, far into the background or ignores them entirely can be nothing but incomplete and doctrinaire, for the individuals in question are in fact members of a society and must meet its demands to some minimum degree since their existence and prosperity as individuals depend on the functioning of their society. In the same way,

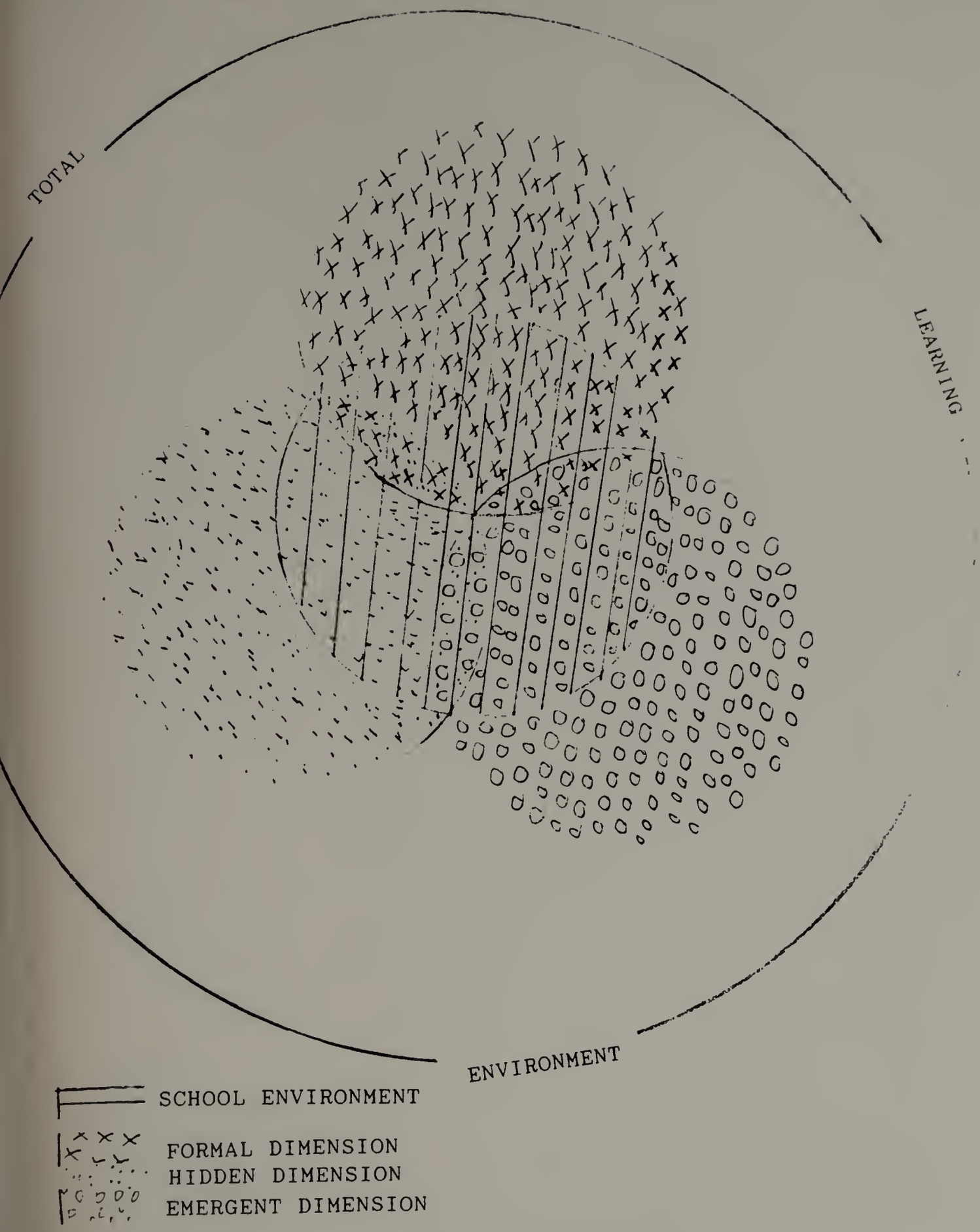

Figure 2.4: An Illustration of Overlap Between Students and Society Needs

> a curriculum grounded only in view of social need or social change must be equally doctrinaire and incomplete, for societies do not exist only for their own sakes but for the prosperity of their members as individuals as well (in Gress, 1978: 493-4).

A related factor to the needs assessment is to study the interests of the learner in order to derive instructional objectives and learning experiences that are both enriching and at the same time interesting. Interest may be defined as "readiness to be concerned with or moved by an object or class of objects" (Webster's Dictionary, 1973). The diagnosis of learner interests must be approached with caution because of the diversity of interest of interest in the learners and the fact that what may interest learners at one given point in time may not necessarily lead to skills needed for future growth. The responsibility of the schools is not merely reinforcing students' interests; it is important to weigh their immediate interests and wants against their future and long term needs. When designing the curriculum, therefore, the critical question is not, Is the learner interested in it? but, Is it in the learner's interest? Pratt exemplifying the above point says:

> If teachers of Dramatic arts in North America had waited for student interest in the subject to express itself, there would still be very little drama taught in schools. But like successful advertisers, they recognised the importance of creating interest rather than merely responding to

> it. By identifying certain basic needs - for physical self expression, poise, and confidence for example - a rationale was established for the widespread of programs in theater arts. This innovation in turn stimulated public interest in the development of repertory, experimental and street theatre across the continent (Pratt, 1980:51).

In fact, the interests of students should be treated as emerging and not static, therefore, one may not really plan for them in advance. But the fact of the matter still remains: the curriculum must create opportunities for the learners to develop interest in their work.

Tyler's final source of objectives is the study of subject matter by subject specialists in schools. Other scholars have preferred to use the term knowledge instead of subject matter. The study of knowledge of the total environment is important because from this we can come up with objectives which will enable the student come to terms with that environment's physical, social, economic, cultural, aesthetic, and spiritual dimensions. Since knowledge has accumulated over the ages to the present, and has been organized according to Phenix (1962), into realms of meaning, and Hirst (1975), into subjects or disciplines, a broad study of these domains of knowledge can generate goals which will guide the school to transmit essential knowledge and skills.

By creating a broad platform in analyzing this knowledge, one is trying to avoid the creation of "tunnel

vision" in which only a small segment of knowledge is open to examination and inclusion in the curriculum. Knowledge should not be treated as a realm of objective "facts" - something external to the individual and divorced from human meaning and inter-subjective exchange (Giroux, 1981). Viewing knowledge this way when answering the primary curriculum question: What ought to be taught in school? is to reduce the learning process to one of accumulation and mastery. A question such as: Why this knowledge? - an important question in this age of knowledge explosion - is superseded by the technical question: What is the best way to learn this given body of knowledge? The latter question is operational and it becomes of paramount importance after the justification of that body of knowledge is made.

Admitted, the "why" question is usually difficult to answer before one engages in the self-formative process of generating one's own set of meanings, a process that involves an interpretive relationship between the "knower" and the "known". It is important therefore to view knowledge not as complete and an end in itself, but rather as a medium for promoting critical self-reflection, human understanding and social progress. The point being made here is that the selection of an appropriate body of knowledge should be followed by effective means of transferring that body of knowledge because it is in the process of transferring that body of knowledge that critical self reflection and understanding is reached.

Many people have criticized the use of subject specialists for determining the type of knowledge to be included in the curriculum on the grounds that the objectives they propose are too technical, too specialized and, in certain cases, inappropriate for a large number of students. One would go further to suggest that what is needed in the planning of knowledge at both primary and secondary level, is a cadre of "subject generalists" with at least adequate knowledge in more than one subject. These people would broaden the scope of particular subjects by linking them with other related subjects, and in doing so creating an integrated curriculum. Nevertheless, there is still need to involve academics in Colleges and Universities in order for the curriculum to contain those aspects of knowledge in a particular subject which the practicing professional teacher may not know. Once that aspect of knowledge is known to the teacher he/she may devise appropriate strategies of using that subject matter in schools. This is the importance of promoting cooperation between subject specialists and practicing teachers in curriculum development.

Control, not learning appears to have a high priority in the traditional curriculum model still in use in many school systems. The world all over is crying for the democratization of society, and education is seen as a

vehicle for the attainment of this ideal. Yet paradoxically, the experiences that students get in schools seem to nurture a "protest syndrome", vandalism and activist tendencies in response to the authoritarian atmosphere generated by the school environment. The reason why this is happening despite the fact that these same schools have a body of knowledge about civic responsibilities and democracy in the curriculum, is largely two fold: (a) the body of knowledge is delivered in a manner that does not generate necessary experiences that are important for instilling democratic attitudes in the students, and (b) the "hidden" and "emerging" dimensions of the school environment are not conducive to the achievement of this ideal. It is the writer's conviction that changing the way we view knowledge, organize it, and teach it, on the one hand, and the way schools operate on the other, from the long held traditional views, will bring about positive "explicit", "hidden" and "emerging" dimensions in the schools, thereby auguring a new era of dynamism in education.

The study of culture as a source of the school's goals and knowledge is very important and deserves more discussion in this study. According to the new sociology of curriculum, schools are part of a wider societal process and thus, they must be judged within a socio-economic framework. Since a whole universe of our cultural heritage

cannot be included in the curriculum, a selection of that knowledge about cultural beliefs, scientific and economic relationships that support the large social order or perpetuate the ideas and interests of those in positions of power and influence is included in the curriculum. The relationship between the school and the dominant society is primarily a political and ideological one.

Central to the study of culture is the emphasis of values. Goodlad and Richter (1966) have proposed that values should be a primary source for selecting school purposes or aims. In their model, they suggested four levels of decision making: the ideological, societal, institutional and instructional. The ideological and societal decision levels are closely linked values. Adding a practical dimension to this model, Goodlad and associates (1979) suggest some modification to their curriculum decision making framework. They state that more attention should be given to the personal and experiential as a decision making level in their conceptual framework. This is in agreement with curriculum reconceptualists like MacDonald, Giroux, Pinar, Apple, Schwab and Vallance, who see learners as potential generators and not mere recipients of curriculum. Secondly, they see values as playing part in all curriculum decisions, not just stated as a guiding educational philosophy at the beginning point in curriculum, as depicted in their original conceptual

scheme. Finally, they have added a socio-political dimension to curriculum decision making.

In Africa, the schools has been caught between two forces: those forces that emphasize the role of the school as that of transmitting African cultural heritage from generation to generation and those forces that charge the school to equip students with relevant scientific and western knowledge in order to promote social and economic progress.

The origins of the cultural transmission idealogy are rooted in the classical academic tradition of both Western and African education. All societies establish schools and programs of education in order to induct the young to the culture and to transmit society's culture and values, and knowledge and skills. In general, traditional educators believe that their primary task is the transmission to the present generation, of bodies of knowledge, skills and of rules or values collected in the past. They believe that the educator's job is the direct instruction of such information and rules. Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) argue that the important emphasis, however, is not in the sanctity of the past, but on the view that education consists of transmitting knowledge, skills, and social and moral rules of the culture. More modern or innovative variations of the cultural transmission view are presented by educational technology and behavior modification. Like

traditional education, these approaches assume that societal knowledge and values are internalized by children through the imitation of adult behavior models, as in informal education, and through explicit instruction as in formal education.

Today, the work of the school must be constantly conducted in the midst of social and economic pressures and changes. Thus, one of the major areas of consideration in curriculum planning is social forces as reflected in: (1) social goals, (2) cultural uniformity and diversity, (3) social pressures, (4) social change, (5) future planning, and (6) concepts of culture (Hass, 1985). Education today cannot just concern itself with the glories and the gories of the past. The past must be learned not as an end in itself but as a means to solving today's problems. Among the many forces confronting human kind today are: environmental pollution and degradation, depletion of natural resources, changing values and morality, the family, rural poverty, and urban and suburban crises, alienation and anxiety, and global political tensions.

To address these issues, people must first realize who they are as individuals and as a group or society, so that they can contextualize these challenges better and find relevant solutions for solving them. The problem in Africa has been that the transmission of western cultural tradition has been emphasized in the schools at the expense

of African cultural tradition. The assumption here has been that since there has been recorded progress in the west, the western cultural tradition is, therefore, superior. What is often forgotten is that this progress has taken place in the west because of the consistency in knowledge, skills and values, and its cumulative effect from the past to the present. In Africa, the continuity of its tradition was affected with the imposition of western cultural and religious values and beliefs during the colonial era. The resultant effect has been the loss of direction in the educational field and in the broader socio-political arena.

The superimposition of one culture over the other cannot bring about economic and social progress. Fortunately, traditional wisdom has prevailed and made Africans to reject directly or indirectly some of the western beliefs and values. In essence what we see is the divergence of African and Western belief systems (Figure 2.5).

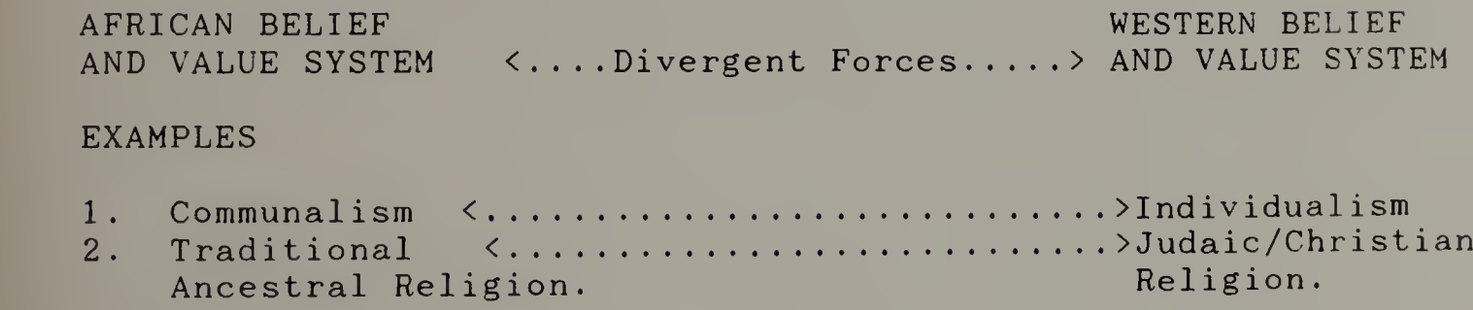

Figure 2.5: The Divergence of African and Western Belief and Value System

This relationship is very complex in Africa because African culture was neglected during the period of colonial domination. In fact, the commonly held positions by those in colonial authority was that Africa had no culture. If it had any, it was primitive and evil. The missionaries also were very much against certain cultural practices, like traditional dances, and initiation rites. If is not surprising, therefore, that the school curriculum emphasized western values and beliefs at the expense of the beliefs and values of the indigenous people. This has done some damage to the continent because western modes of life, have become the desired mode of living and thinking among those receiving some education, and the aspiring illiterate masses. But paradoxically, the context under which the western mode of life is perpetuated is African. This contradiction between western culture and the socio-economic and linguistic reality of African countries has trapped the acculturated Africans between two cultures, none of which they can live in perfect harmony.

There is no denial about the benefits of western scientific civilization. The point being made here, is that those western scientific ideas and principles that were responsible for progress in western countries, have failed to work because of the way they were introduced, lacked the voluntary characteristic that is a necessary condition for effective implementation and adoption of new

ideas. Secondly, the context of the African way of life was not studied thereby negating the very grounds these new ideas were to have solid foundation. Since independence, African nations have been involved in a "back to African culture crusade", and the school has been seen as the main agent in this endeavor. This is where there is need in the name of social and economic progress as Amilcar Carbral put it:

> ...for critical analysis of African culture in relation to...the exigencies of progress - confronting this new stage in African history (Cabral, 1973:52).

Cabral cites, for example, certain traditional and cultural values which can be no less harmful to Africa:

> Indiscriminate compliments; systematic exaltation of virtues without condemning faults; blind acceptance of values of the culture, without considering what presently and or potentially regressive elements it contains; confusion between what is the expression of an objective and material historical reality and what appears to be a creation of the mind or the product of a peculiar temperament; [and] absurd linking of artistic creation, whether good or not, with supposed racial characteristics (Cabral, 1973:51).

So, when the issue of the study of culture as one determinant of the goals of education, and ultimately, content and learning experiences is raised, it is important for curriculum planners and decision makers to be...

> ...conscious of the value of African cultures in the framework of universal of [global] civilization

> [and] to compare this value with that of other cultures, not with a view of deciding its superiority or inferiority but in order to determine, in the general framework of the struggle for progress, what contribution African culture has made and can make, and what contribution it can or must receive from elsewhere (Cabral, 1973:52).

What Cabral is stating here is simply bringing the divergent forces of Western culture and African culture, as illustrated in Figure 2.5, into an interactive convergence or synthesis (Figure 2.6).

AFRICAN BELIEF AND VALUE SYSTEMS.....>PROGRESSIVE AND DYNAMIC BELIEF AND VALUE SYSTEMS <.....WESTERN BELIEF AND VALUE SYSTEMS

Figure 2.6: The Synthesis of of African and Western Belief Value and System.

In his book Grassroots Politics in an African State, Barrows (1980) is in agreement with the synthesis posited above. He says:

> The synthetic model posits more adaptability on the part of the societies in general and "traditional" role in particular. Change in one sector of society need not ramify consistently and unidirectionally throughout the system. Modern and traditional traits can fuse, interpenetrate, or co-exist without systematic conflict (Barrows,1980:33).

The synthesis model predicts not the absence of conflict in societies, but rather the absence of thorough

going conflict between such characteristics of the social system as traditionality and modernity. The displacement model, on the other hand proposes, systematic patterns of conflict between central (modern) and peripheral (traditional) sides of a linkage model, where as the assumptions underlying the synthesis model lead us to expect conflict, if it occurs, is of a particularistic sort unrelated to the traditional-modern distinction. It should not be forgotten that "tradition" within the African context includes elements of western European tradition that missionary and colonial education introduced. In other parts of the continent, it also includes Arabic and/or Islamic culture, and oriental culture. In other words, the so called African tradition as we know it now is not "pure". This is not to say that it ought to, because static culture that does not take into consideration environmental and technological changes from within and from without cannot survive.

In this analysis we are also saying that even the western (modern) belief system itself has traditional and modern elements. The fact that the latter has a preponderant influence in urban areas of Western countries and the former in rural areas, or the fact that the traditional element of the western belief system like the protestant ethic has fused with modern industrial organizational behavior, shows that the synthesis model is

more applicable to knowledge and behavioral diffusion than the displacement model.

In this study of knowledge as a basis for curriculum planning and development, doubt is cast about the efficacy of the displacement model as a framework for the bringing about of knowledge essential for economic development. Instead, the process of mutual adjustment between traditionality and modernity as portrayed by the synthesis of western "modern" with African "traditional" belief systems is advanced.

Once goals have been derived from the three sources the next stage is the arrangement of the tentative goals in some rank or hierarchy so that those which are redundant, irrelevant for certain levels, or spurious, can be discarded or restructured. This according to Tyler, can be achieved by using two screens: the philosophy of education is here defined as the set of values society holds regarding what should be taught in schools. Apart from critically reflecting on societal values which Tyler, Taba and Goodlad emphasize in their models, the curriculum planner should also scrutinize the educational policy of the nation or state to make sure that the goals consistently tie up with societal and institutional expectations. In his naturalistic model Walker (1971) uses policy as a guide for making curriculum and instructional decisions. Walker, defines policy as a body of precedents

evolved from the three components of platform - conceptions, theories, and aims - which are sophisticated products of reflection on life and on education.

Reinforcing the philosophy of education is the idealogy screen. Here, ideology is not used in its strictly classical Marxist sense, where its meaning is limited to either a mode of domination or to a mode of critical intervention as in social and political revolution. Ideology is defined here as:

> "essentially an action program derived from certain philosophical assumptions and doctrinal postulates about the nature of reality" (Brzensinski, cited in Shipler, 1983:262).

For ideology to become useful as a screen of educational goals, one must move beyond the false notion that schools are merely places that impose dominant hegemonic meanings and values upon relatively passive students (banking education). Schools should be seen as humanizing centers in society, and as such any educational goals which perpetuates oppression by the dominant class(es) must be discarded. Knowledge must not be used to mystify reality in order to entrench oppression. Ideology can be divided into four major realms:

> (a) the economic reality i.e., ideologies of production, exchange, distribution, etc. (b) the cultural realm i.e., media, art, etc. (c) the social realm i.e., ideologies of private sphere, family, education, social groups, etc. and (d) the political realm i.e., the ideology of state

democracy, civil rights, legal-judicial system, etc. (Kellner, 1981:99).

The tentative goals can be critically analyzed and matched against the above realms of ideology. The relationship between ideology and school is dialectical, that is, ideology need not be passively transmitted, but through deliberation and critical analysis, an understanding is reached out of which clear goals emerge.

Once the goals are clearly defined through the screening or decision criteria devices, the process for generating specific objectives from the goals begins. Many curriculum scholars agree that while this task be performed by curriculum specialists/developers and teachers. The suggested tentative objectives are further screened to make sure that they are in conformity with conditions intrinsic in learning. At this level, according to Tyler, the psychology of learning is used as a screening device.

The primary purpose of the psychology of learning screen is to distinguish between those objectives which are achievable from those which are difficult to attain by the majority of students at the grade level contemplated. This is done by applying knowledge and principles of proven theories of learning and helps the curriculum in selecting objectives for the appropriate grade level (grade placement) by assessing the entering behaviors/skills and knowledge of the learners. It also helps in arranging

objectives from simple to complex and/or concrete to abstract, and indicates which objectives are dependent upon the realization of other objectives (pre-requisites). One of the guides in the identification and arrangement of instructional objectives in hierarchical order, is the taxonomy of educational objectives in the cognitive domain developed by Bloom, and associates (1956), those in the affective domain developed by Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia in 1964 and those in the psychomotor domain developed by Anita Harrow in 1972. Critics of Bloom doubt about the efficacy of the taxonomy in determining what objectives can be covered at what level. Much of this then is left to classroom teacher, because his/her knowledge, skills and field experience should ultimately decide what objectives to operationalize and in what order. The objectives in the curriculum design should not be treated as a final blue print but as organizational aid to the teacher.

Out of this screening exercise emerge clear and explicit instructional objectives which spell out what the learner will think, act, or feel at the end of a learning episode. The emergence of instructional objectives at this stage clears the way for the selection and organization of learning opportunities and the creation of an environment that will provide students enriching experiences.

Tyler has not been along in emphasizing objectives in curriculum planning and development. Before him Thorndike

(1921) and Bobbitt (1924) demonstrated how curriculum components - especially educational objectives - were to be formulated. Goodlad and Richter (1966) state that rational curriculum planning involves the derivation of educational aims from values, educational objectives from educational aims and learning opportunities from educational objectives. Saylor and Alexander (1974) see the purpose of objectives in a similar way when they say that the stating of purposes for which a school exist and formulating the goals and objectives of an educational program as central in curriculum planning. Writing on objectives Robert Gagne (1964) identifies two areas of instruction in which the importance of specifying objectives has been recognized. The first of these areas is technical training in the military services, in connection with which the terms task description and task analysis have been used. Basically, these terms reflect a recognition of the importance of specifying the outcomes of training before the training is planned. Since training is more specific than education, one is not surprising why the specification of objectives is very useful in this sphere. The second area comes from programmed instruction. The specification of instructional objectives is an important step in planning programmed instruction and mastery learning.

Criticisms of Tyler's model have centered on the author's conception of how objectives should be stated.

Kliebard (1970) for example, states that one of the main problems with Tyler's model arises from the three sources it draws upon for educational objectives. He claims that there is no attempt in the model to integrate or relate the three sources. He also asserts that their distinction between content and objectives is blurred. Thus, there is confusion about the exact way in which subjects are to be sources of objectives. The other argument is that Tyler has provided no real basis for selecting objectives, that his rationale confines the curriculum developer to a mean-ends orientation with objectives always the point of beginning.

Eisner, (1967) criticizing educational objectives in general, spells out four limitations why they are not always used as they are intended. First, he states that the process of instruction is dynamic and complex; it yields far too numerous outcomes to be specified in behavior and content terms in advance. A second limitation is that the theory behind educational objectives fails to recognize the constraints of various subject matter upon objectives. For example, in some subject areas such as mathematics, languages and the sciences, it is possible to specify with great precision the particular operation or behavior the student is to perform after instruction. In other areas like the arts, such specification is frequently not possible, and when possible may not be desirable.

The third point he makes is that there is confusion on the use of educational objectives as a standard for measurement when in some areas it can be used only as a criterion for judgement. Eisner argues that not all outcomes of curriculum are amenable to measurement. He says that the assumption that objectives can be used as standards to measure achievement, fails to distinguish adequately between the application of a standard and the making of a judgement. Certain subjects and areas of study, especially those which are qualitative in character, have no comparable rules and hence are less amenable to quantitative assessment.

The final limitation is related to the function of objectives in curriculum development. His main contention is that theory has not adequately distinguished between logical adequacy in determining the relationship of means to ends when examining the curriculum as a product and the psychological processes that may usefully be employed in developing curricula. So, educational objectives need not precede the selection and organization of content. Macdonald (1965) and Raths (1971) share this view.

Many adherents of the use of behavioral objectives believe that making the objectives of instruction specific and observable, the objectives are more easily attained. Simmons (1973) objects to this belief by saying:

> It is worth noting that despite the heavy emphasis that proponents of behavioral objectives place on

> observable evidence, little, if any empirical research has been produce to support claims for the efficacy of behavioral objectives. In fact Jencks and Deno (1971) found that neither objectives *per se* nor the degree of behavioral specification of objectives increased learning (in Gress, 1978:381).

Simmons, sees the fundamental problem with this emphasis on behavior as ignoring the crucial distinction between knowledge and behavior. The result is a tendency to think about educational objectives totally in terms of behavior rather than imparting knowledge. The problem is difficult because there is generally no simple and easily definable relationship between behavior and knowledge. Simmons says that often behavior is only an indirect expression of knowledge. Furthermore, he states that knowledge can find expression in a variety behaviors, and the set of behaviors may be indefinitely large to link either understanding or interpretation with particular behavior. Deese (1969) and Fodor and Garrett (1966) agree with Simmons' observation.

On the positive side, Simmons says that behavioral objectives are useful to the extent that they require teachers and others concerned with instruction to think more carefully and in more specific terms about instruction. But he is quick to add that this minor benefit hardly justifies the important role that many would assign to behavioral objectives.

We can close the objectives debate for now by saying that objectives can help in drawing inferences about the tactics of instruction. Second, teachers should discriminative on the use of objectives in order not to stringently apply specific instructional objectives in subjects that are qualitative in nature. As to the efficacy of the taxonomy of educational objectives in determining what objectives to cover at what level, much of this should be left to the classroom teacher; his/her knowledge, skills and field experience should ultimately decide what objectives to operationalize and in what order. Finally, objectives in the curriculum design should not be treated as a final blue print but as an organizational aid to the teacher.

Tyler's model has also been criticized because of its linearity. A poll was conducted by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) in which it asked the opinions of six of its prominent members about Tyler's rationale. Two of the respondents of the ASCD poll criticized the model for failing to address questions of value, specifically questions of a moral, political, ethical, or aesthetic nature. In this sense they found the model too rational and thus insufficiently real.

Over the years, Tyler's rationale has been supplemented and tightened in practice. Leyton Soto (1969)

has collaborated with Tyler to produce a revision of the model in which the screen of philosophy and psychology precedes and three sources of objectives. Leyton Soto argues that one's philosophical and psychological orientation can inform the examination of the three sources of objectives. Miller and Seller (1985) agree with this revision because they believe that philosophy and psychology are parts of an overall metaorientation that forms the basis of one's curriculum position.

While agreeing with the above arguments, the researcher is of the opinion that indeed, one uses psychology, philosophy, and even personal ideology in trying to analyze and select objectives and content from the society, the learner and from the universe of knowledge. The screening takes place consciously and subconsciously at individual level. However, the curriculum being planning is not for the individual's thinking and planning the curriculum alone, but for the community or society as a whole. As such, there is still need to screen the various inclinations of those involved in the studying of the three sources. This screening is now at group and institutional level. Sometimes, one's own philosophical inclination may not be in agreement with other members of the curriculum decision making group or the official philosophy of education. Hence, the need for the same set of screens to precede (level 1) and proceed

(level 2), and three sources of objectives (Figure 2.7). The latter level is useful in group decision making where individual and institutional discrepancies can be screened out and a consensus reached as to what kinds of objectives to operationalize.

Ralph Tyler himself has accepted some of these criticisms. For example in his article, "Specific Approaches to Curriculum Development", he writes:

> Recognizing the importance of selecting objectives of human judgments based on experience as well as relevant data systematically collected and analyzed, I recommend the procedure of group deliberation as described by Joseph J. Schwab in his "The Arts of the Practical" and illustrated in some detail by Seymour Fox at the AERA Convention in 1971. Suggestions and judgments of teachers, subject matter specialists, curriculum specialists, psychologists, sociologists, and specialists in human development can be considered and their probable consequences deliberated in ways that lead to constructive decisions that form the basis for initial objectives to be tested for their attainability and their effects in real curriculum projects. This procedure of deliberation is also helpful in defining the level of generalization on which to focus on objective.... To state that an objective of arithmetic is to teach students to "think" is obviously too general to guide the selection of learning experiences, the activities of the student or of the teacher, but to formulate more than 3,000 objectives of arithmetic as E.L. Thorndike did more than fifty years ago is to caricature human learning (Tyler, 1975:26).

Indeed, the curriculum planner should use deliberation as proposed by Schwab, Walker and Freire in their deliberative models for curriculum decision making. In this study, this deliberation should take place at all stages of the curriculum planning and decision making process. In order to make sure that all interested in the

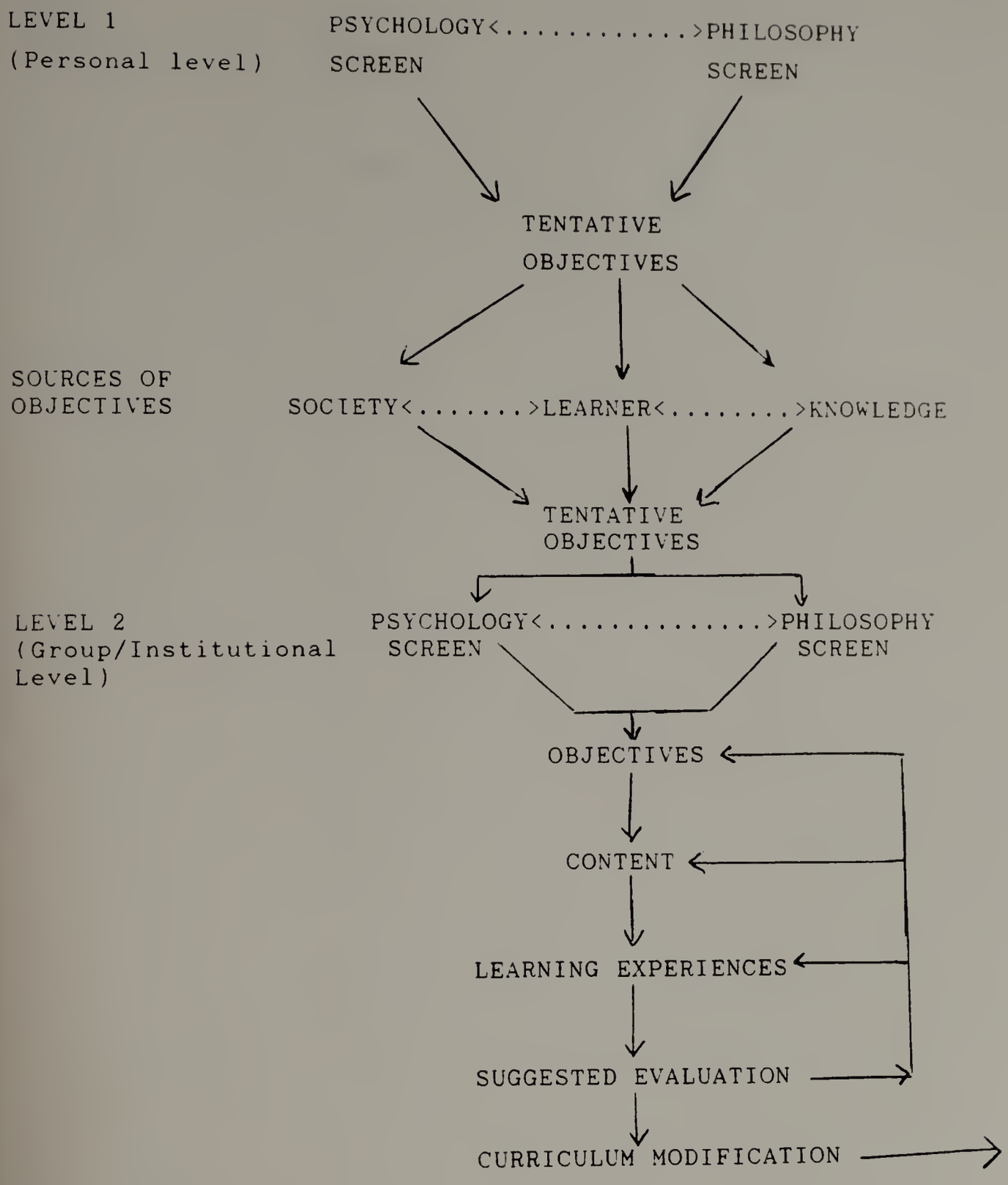

Figure 2.7: The Derivation and Screening of Objectives at Personal and Institutional Levels.

education of the youth are involved in the decision making process, the researcher, sees two levels of deliberations emerging at: (a) the social-cultural level, and (b) the psychological-technical level. At the social-cultural level, deliberation about the curriculum is broad in both context and content. Here, as many teachers, parents and members of the community as possible are involved in the making of decisions about the curriculum. This stage is related to Goodlad's societal level of decision making process because ultimately the outcome of the deliberation can be used in curriculum policy making and planning.

The psychological-technical level also called the instructional level by other scholars, is specific in context and content. This level uses the information analyzed and synthesized in level one to guide the curriculum development process. The real task here is to apply knowledge and principles of psychology in developing the curriculum. Here, psychological and technological issues of curriculum instruction and the learning process dominate. The kind of deliberation at this level is therefore specific and more refined. Organizers of such deliberations can use the group decision making procedures discussed earlier on in this study, in order to facilitate the decision making process.

It must be mentioned here that as one starts answering Tyler's second question, what educational experiences can

be provided that are likely to attain these purposes? The overlap between curriculum planning and development becomes apparent. In other words, most curriculum planning models have a development phase in them. So while this study has designated a special section for curriculum development process, this has been done for organizational purposes only.

Let me take the reader back to Tyler's second question. In his model, Tyler uses "educational experiences" interchangeably with "learning experiences". He distinguishes learning experiences from content and activities performed by the teacher which are part of the repertoire of his/her teaching strategies. According to Tyler, the term learning experience refers to the interaction between the learner and the external conditions in the environment to which he/she can react. This leaves the curriculum worker with the problem of determining the kinds of experiences likely to produce given educational objective and the problem of how to set up situations which will evoke or provide within the students the kinds of learning experiences desired. Tyler offers the following principles in selecting learning experiences:

1. For a given objective, a student must have experiences that give him an opportunity to practice the kind of behavior implied by the objective.

2. Learning experiences must be such that the student obtains satisfaction from carrying on the kind of behavior implied by the objective. To set up situations that will enable the learner to obtain such satisfaction, the teacher must have some understanding of the kinds of interest and background the students have.
3. The reactions desired in the experience are within the range of possibility for the students involved.
4. The teacher or curriculum maker must be aware that there are many particular experiences that can be used to attain the same educational objectives.
5. The teacher or curriculum maker must be aware that the same learning experience will usually bring about several outcomes.

Although Tyler distinguishes learning experience from content, the latter is closely related to learning experience. The learner reacts to and interacts with curriculum content, the teacher, his/her peers, and the physical environment in order to gain his/her learning experience. Several criteria have been proposed in curriculum literature for selecting appropriate subject matter content from the universe of knowledge, namely:

- The validity and the significance of the content as disciplined knowledge.

- The balance that is maintained between content for general understanding and content for study in depth.
- The appropriateness of the content of student needs and interest.
- The durability, or lasting quality of the elements of content that are being emphasized. Understandably, it is difficult to determine how an item of content will last especially in the sciences where ideas change so rapidly. In general, the closer an item is to a main idea or concept, the greater its chance of being durable.
- The relationship of facts and other minor ideas and concepts. This is related to the criterion above.
- The learnability of content.
- The possibilities of illuminating the content with data from other fields of knowledge. Related to the organizing principle of integration, the curriculum planner should include areas in a subject that can provide a linkage with other subject areas in the curriculum (Doll, 1986).

Tyler's third question: How can learning experiences be organized for effective instruction? is closely related to the second question. The organization of learning experiences is very important in curriculum development

because, it greatly influences the efficiency and effectiveness of instruction, and the degree to which major educational changes are brought about in learners. This question takes us back to issue discussed earlier about organization of knowledge. The traditional way of organizing content has been the subject-centered approach. Organizing knowledge by content tends to compartmentalize learning, to emphasize memorization, and to make the subject rather than learner's activities and interest central.

There are other ways in which content can be organized. In an effort to relate proximate bodies of subject matter, curriculum planners have correlated content across subject areas. Elements of history, geography and literature can be correlated in a curriculum. This approach makes the subjects offered in a school curriculum to have a mutual relationship in content, and this facilitates learning. Organizing in broader fields, a process called integration or fusion, is an attempt by curriculum planners to minimize compartmentalization of knowledge. Social Studies which integrates content from geography, history, civics, etc., and general science which draws content from biology, physics and chemistry, are examples of organizing content in broad fields.

The fourth approach is the core approach. Core programs were developed in the United States in order to

allow students to have a "core" of experience with one teacher during a period of time that was longer than had been customary. This unified core of experience could be centered in subject matter on the one hand or in students' needs and interests on the other. There were four kinds of core programs that came into prominence in the United States:

1. The unified studies core, closely analogous to correlation.
2. The culture epoch core, an attempt to study a lengthy period in human history by introducing all content that could help with understanding the period.
3. The contemporary problem core, in which subject lines crossed to permit the study of problem in popular elections, crime prevention, modern arts, and so on.
4. The adolescent needs core, which dealt with the presumed common problems, interests, and needs of American youth (Doll, 1986).

One of the serious problems in core teaching and administration lay in the scarcity of teachers specifically prepared to teach in core programs. The core programs have over time, become less and less prevalent in schools.

A fifth plan for organizing content had its base in Florence Stratemeyer's "persistent life situations." This

framework which tried to define the characteristics of individuals and society, leading to a listing of "persistent life situations" which learners face. This was an attempt to move attention for subject matter to the life needs of the people.

The final approach closely related to life needs is experience or learner-centered curriculum. In this plan, students' own experience become the starting point for planning. Here, the learner is the center around which knowledge and learning experiences are organized. This is the most radical form of curriculum organization and is currently receiving support from experimental philosophy, interactional sociology and gestalt psychology.

Whatever approach an institution chooses, the following factors should be taken into consideration when organizing content: scope, sequence, continuity, balance and integration. These decision criteria for effective curriculum organization, are emphasized by both Tyler and Taba.

Scope is a way of describing what is covered, or what is learned. One needs to determine what is learned in two dimensions: (a) what content should be mastered (breadth) and, what mental processes should be experienced (depth). The failure to see scope as two dimensional creates a dilemma. When scope is seen as the breadth of content, the demands of coverage conflicts with the demands arising out

of requirements of depth; the reverse is also true. This problem can be resolved by designing a curriculum which covers breadth at the lower levels and depth at higher levels of schooling.

Sequence is the ordering of content and learning experiences: What follows what? and why? Such questions relate to the timing of the objectives and there are several ways of ordering content depending on the subject(s) in consideration. In subject containing a time sequence such as history and literature for example, the time line may be the criterion for setting up the order of presentation. Sequence can also be achieved by geographical expansion. In geography and social studies, this method hold merit. In subject centered curricula, an internal logical consistency is often assumed. In some situations this relationship takes the form of pre-requisites, that is each new step depends upon the mastery of the previous one. The study of language, for example, may be built upon a hierarchy of certain grammatical knowledges and forms that are necessary for later steps.

Doll (1986) summarizes the following as traditional ways of establishing sequence:

Movement from the simple to the complex
Study based on prerequisite learning
Movement from part to whole
Movement from whole to part
Chronological ordering of events
Movement from the present into the past

[Movement from the past to the present]
Concentric movement in ever widening circles of
Understanding or involvement
Movement from concrete experiences to concept
(Doll, 1986:157)

Doll, cautions curriculum specialists and teachers against achieving sequence by ordering topics. He says that there are so many available topics and possible orders of topics that only a more comprehensive basis for making choices as the ones lists above will do. Some curricularists have recommended the sequencing of learning experiences according to difficulty level. To determine how difficult certain learning tasks are for a certain age or grade level is sometimes arbitrary, and Bruner (1966) has challenged this consideration.

Continuity is another factor curriculum developers should consider when organizing the curriculum content. It refers to the conditions where the learner will move smoothly from level to level in the education system (vertical continuity) and be able to relate the content and experiences in one subject area with other areas offered in the school curriculum (horizontal continuity). Vertical continuity is related to sequence while horizontal continuity is related to integration. Considering the diversity of individual differences in a classroom, it is impossible to plot a uniform plan of continuity for all children.

Although the experiences of all may be continuous in time, the differences among these experiences need to be wide. The problem of providing continuity of learning presents itself at three different levels: (a) the level of organizing specific units of teaching and learning, (b) the level of establishing continuity between and among levels of schooling, and (c) the level of providing continuity in experience for individual pupils. The first of these is the responsibility of curriculum developers and publishers of curriculum materials. The last two are the responsibility of individual school system. The case of giving more autonomy to schools in making instructional decisions is argued here because it is also difficult to plot a uniform plan of continuity for all schools.

Scope, sequence and continuity are very interrelated, and the effective organization of one affects the other positively. According to Taba (1962), much of the confusion and difficulty in developing cumulative and continuous learning comes from the fact that in setting up sequence in curriculum designs, only the sequence of content is considered, while the sequence of the powers and competencies (which is related to scope), is largely overlooked. The result is that:

> the curriculum sequence reflects growth in mental powers only to the extent that the level of content requires it, and not because of a clear plan for the developmental sequence of these powers,

> competencies, and skills. Out of this confusion grow all sorts of difficulties: poor articulation between levels of schooling, the perennial complaints by each level of lack of preparation on the preceding level, misplaced expectations, and a lowered amount of growth (in Purpel, 1976:309-310).

To overcome this difficulty, Taba proposed a double pattern of scope and sequence is used in organizing learning opportunities and experiences. This perspective would aid in deciding when the extension of scope of content (breadth) interferes with the development of the scope in mental powers (depth) and how the sequence could assure a sequence in levels of mental powers, or vice-versa. The use of basic ideas (like home, school, community, nation, etc.) as focussing centers facilitates curriculum organization. First, it is easier to see which intellectual powers and operations are necessary to deal with than it is only when topics and their dimensions are available for analysis. A double sequence also helps to determine whether there is an increment in such powers as the capacity to analyze data, organize ideas, to respond to feelings and ideas.

Achieving and maintaining balance in the curriculum is one of the most vital and increasingly complex tasks for the curriculum developer. The curriculum developer must strive to maintain a balance which while meeting the needs of individual learners, the curriculum must also meet the needs and demands of the society. The school, in the

process of implementing a balanced curriculum must create opportunities for students to experience all major areas of human competence. These area may include skills in communication, opportunities for problem solving, understanding civic responsibilities, ability to care for one's mental and physical health, interest and skills in aesthetic, and recognition and enhancement of special interest. In order to cater for these experiences at group as well as individual level, organizational flexibility is needed.

The last factor to consider when organizing content is the integration of knowledge offered in the curriculum. Knowledge should not be organized discretely; the curriculum design should allow for the fusion of bodies of knowledge. Integration is also seen as something that takes place in an individual whether or not the curriculum content is organized for that purpose, that is, the learner organizes in a meaningful way knowledge and experience which at first seem largely unrelated. Opportunities for such integrative processes should, therefore, be created for the learner to achieve integrative experiences.

Tyler's fourth and last question addresses evaluation, an important factor in curriculum development. The curriculum design should have evaluative strategies which will determine what to appraise and evaluate, and means of doing it. The first and important aspect of evaluation is

to determine to what extent the educational objectives already set in the program are actually being realized by the students. However, student achievement data must be treated with caution when it is being used as evidence that the curriculum is achieving its purpose or not because of the implicit and emergent dimensions that also contribute to the learner's success or failure. This evaluation feedback is also supposed to: (a) assess the clarity of the instructional objectives, (b) the effectiveness of the instructional opportunities used to achieve the objectives, and (c) the adequacy of the whole curriculum.

Educational evaluation has achieved a status of its own and to discuss it within the context of curriculum design will be inadequate. Various models of curriculum evaluation will, therefore, be treated separately.

The four curriculum questions which Tyler posed as guiding principles for curriculum and instruction do not differ from Taba's seven steps for conceptualizing a curriculum (Figure 2.8). Taba agreed with Tyler about the important elements on which to base curriculum decisions: Aims and objectives, Content, learning experiences and evaluation. She however, emphasized the relationship of these elements and the criteria for making decisions about these elements. For example, she states that a decision made about any one element out of relationship to others is bound to be faulty, because each element of curriculum

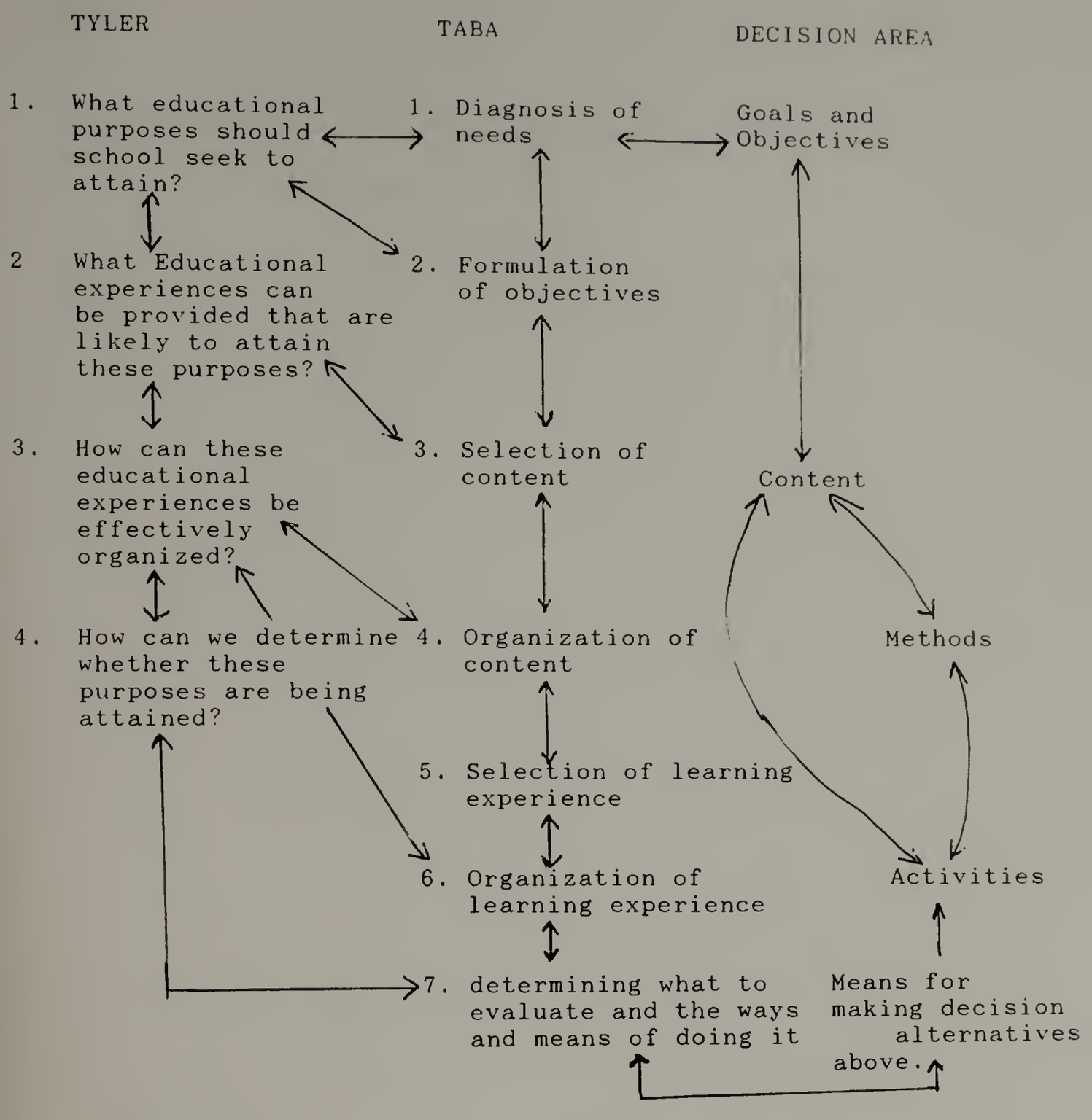

Figure 2.8: A Comparison of Tyler's Rationale and Taba's Conceptual Framework for Curiculum Design and Important Decision Areas Addressed.

acquires meaning and substance in reference to other elements and by its place in the pattern that encompasses all others. Other scholars, have not questioned the efficacy of these elements as powerful guidelines for planning developing, but rather they question how these decisions are arrived. Some Attempts have been made to political framework has been used as a basis for planning the curriculum. And as stated earlier, this direction has been championed by curriculum reconceptualists like Schwab, Walker, Freire and Apple, just to mention a few. In order to do justice to the "non tradition" way of curriculum planning, beyond the tangential coverage made above, Schwab's model will be reviewed in some detail below. This model has a special place in this study because it advocates an eclectic and pragmatic approach which is being proposed in this study.

Schwab's model is a departure from curriculum planning that rely heavily on theories. He boldly states that theory in the curriculum field is inappropriate and even there it is appropriate, it is inadequate to the tasks which the curriculum field sets them. Schwab proposes that the bulk of curriculum energies be diverted from the theoretic to the practical, to the quasi practical and the eclectic. Exemplifying what the terms "eclectic" and "practical" mean, he writes:

> By "eclectic" I mean the arts by which unsystematic, uneasy, but usable focus on a body of problem is affected among diverse theories, each relevant to the problem in a different way. By the "practical" I do not mean the curbstone practicality of the mediocre administrator and the man on the street, for whom the practical means easily achieved familiar means. I refer, rather, to a complex discipline...concerned with choice and action, in contrast with the theoretic, which is concerned with knowledge. Its methods lead to defensible decisions where methods of the theoretic lead to warranted conclusions and differ radically from the methods and competencies entailed in the theoretic (In Gress, 1978:487).

It is apparent in Schwab's argument that he does not do away with theory outright. He, however, rejects the dominance of one theory or set of theories in determining curriculum decisions. The use of the eclectic approach is justified by the fact that a theory does not explain all phenomena. In his words:

> A theory covers and formulates the <u>regularities</u> among things and events it subsumes. It abstracts a general or ideal case. It leaves behind the nonuniformities, the particularistic, which characterize each concrete instance of the facts subsumed. More over, in the process of idealization, theoretical inquiry may often leave out considerable conspicuous facets of <u>all</u> cases because its substantive principles of inquiry or its methods cannot handle them (in Gress, 1978:496).

It requires, therefore, the use of diverse theories each relevant to the problem of education in a different way. The use of diverse theories help to illuminate on the particularistic which characterize each concrete situation

in education but left out by one theory in the name of generalization. The researcher is in favor of an eclectic and synthetic approach to knowledge and theory in order to bring about a better understanding of the curriculum decision making process.

In making a critical appraisal of Schwab's "The Practical: A Language for Curriculum," Starratt (1974) agrees with Schwab the need to replace the one dimensional fragmented theory. However, he says that rather than flee from the task of theory building, there is need for the development of a comprehensive theory. Secondly, Starratt sees Schwab's proposal as being in a social context larger than the field of curriculum itself. He points out that:

> the political negotiation and management of educational problems [as implied in Schwab's deliberative process] is the job of teachers, administrators and central office supervisors, not of curriculum theorists (Starratt, 1974:25).

The researcher, thinks otherwise. While role clarification enhances the efficiency of a system, the educational practitioner and curriculum theorist or specialist must work hand in hand because quite so often, some of the problems that the practitioner meets are related to the curriculum. So, the practitioner needs some insights about curriculum related problems from the curriculum theorist. Conversely, it is important for the theorist to involve him/herself with the practical

dimension of curriculum decision making so that he/she can effectively apply the multi-dimensional theories of curriculum to try and understand and resolve practical curriculum and instructional problems.

Curriculum Development Process

As stated earlier, the process of curriculum planning and that of curriculum development overlaps. However, there are distinct curriculum development activities that are not emphasized in the planning of the curriculum. In this section, selected curriculum development models will be reviewed and since the process is a practical enterprise, the context and conditions under which these activities operate will also be discussed. The effectiveness of the development of curriculum depends on a number of factors, and one of them factors is participation. Curriculum development activities under centralized educational settings does not involve many teachers in the development of the curriculum, whereas, in decentralized settings, a greater number of teachers are involved in the process. The involvement of teachers in curriculum development is very crucial because they are the people closest to the learners and, therefore, are in a better position to decide what content to include in the curriculum and what teaching strategies to apply in the

delivery of content and the enriching of student learning experiences.

Gagne's Instructional Design System

Robert Gagne's instructional design advocates a system's approach to the design of instruction that is based on "logical systematic thinking" and "empirical test and fact finding". His model has twelve steps:

1. Needs analysis
2. Analysis of goals and objectives
3. Analysis of alternative ways to meet ends
4. Designing instructional components
5. Analysis of resources and constraints
6. Constraint-removal actions
7. Selecting or developing materials
8. Designing student-performance assessment
9. Field testing and formative evaluation
10. Adjustment, revisions, and further evaluation
11. Summative Evaluation of Systems
12. Operational installation

The first step, needs analysis is slightly different from the needs assessment in curriculum planning. This needs analysis subordinate to the needs assessment in that it addresses the specific needs for program development.

According to Gagne and Briggs (1979) perceived needs fall into three categories:

> (1) a need to conduct instruction more effectively and efficiently for some course which is already part of the curriculum; (2) a need to revitalize both the content and the method for some existing course; or (3) a need to develop a new course (Gagne and Briggs, 1979).

Gagne argues that as the tempo of change in society increases, educational needs should be reviewed more frequently, or else the lag between actual and needed curricula will widen rather than close.

The second step the analysis of goals and objectives is similar to the step discussed in Tyler's and Taba's model for curriculum design. The researcher envisages this step to be operationalized depending on whether the educational system is centralized or decentralized. Under centralized settings, goals are formulated at the planning stage for the entire system. The curriculum developer's task is to translate these goals to fit into the language of the subject(s) being developed, and to generate from the goals specific instructional objectives. Being an instructional technologists, Gagne states that objectives should be stated in specific and behavioral terms, so that measurement can take place. This view has been challenged by Eisner (1967) and Simmons (1973) and others, and their arguments have already been presented above. Needless to say, objectives should not be made specific just to aid

"measurement of student outcomes". The argument for specifying objectives should be based on whether it is going to facilitate instruction and learning, in other words, the case for specific instructional objectives is as predictors of learning.

The analysis of alternative ways to meet the needs in step one, deals with content and teaching strategies. In as far as content is concerned, the curriculum developer grapples with the issue of organizing content. The organizing principles of scope, sequence, continuity, and balance - already discussed under the curriculum planning section - become the curriculum developer's criteria for making decisions about the organization of content. The designation of appropriate teaching strategies for the content developed, depends on the learning environment and the system's policy relating to instruction. The curriculum developer can prescribe classroom versus laboratory, large group versus small group, lecture versus individualized study, etc. Regarding what skills to emphasize, here again, choice as to whether the curriculum should be "problem centered", "process centered", or "content centered" is made by the decision makers in conjunction with curriculum specialists.

Depending on what system one is working in, analysis of alternative ways of organizing content, and the choice of teaching strategies can be flexible or rigid. In

centralized systems, these choices are usually prescribed at the central office to be followed by all schools. In decentralized settings, there is more room for flexibility because it is believed that the specific learning environment faced by the teacher and the students, should determine how to organize content and what strategy to use in the teaching of the content.

Gagne's fourth step, that of designing instructional components is a very important step in his model. This step involves planning the nature of materials for study, specifying the methods for presenting the materials, identifying activities the learner is to engage, defining in explicit terms, the role of the teacher in guiding the learner, planning strategies for keeping track of student progress and assessing student performance, and devising "guidance procedures".

The fifth step, involves the analysis of resources and constraints. It may be before the actual development of curriculum materials to ascertain whether commercial materials are appropriate or if system-based materials must be created. Other constraints are financial in nature. For example, certain activities recommended in the curriculum, like field based experiences in science or social studies may be difficult to implement at the school level. So, the curriculum developer must make these recommendations bearing in mind the reality of the user

system. Related to this step, is what Gagne calls the Constraint-Removal Actions. He claims that constraints arising from cost-effectiveness needs may be difficult to remove; he, therefore argues, the price of "failure" (e.g., drop outs, delinquency, incompetent graduates) must be considered in any analysis of the cost effectiveness of educational programs. In other educational systems this is an issue for educational planners to grapple with and not for curriculum developers.

The seventh step is the selecting or development of materials. This may involve both the purpose of instructional materials and the redesigning of materials that are currently in use. Once materials are developed, the curriculum designer now turns to the development of assessment tools. The purpose for designing assessment tools is three fold: (1) to enable the teacher to discover what a student has mastered and whether the student is ready to proceed to the next stage; (2) to allow the teacher plan for remedial instruction for those students who have failed on a small unit of study; and (3) to assist in summative evaluation. This evaluation is necessary because it legitimizes the continuation of the use of some curriculum materials or to design new content or methodologies based on the results.

The ninth step is field testing and formative evaluation of the materials developed. Gagne, suggests

that the new system should first be tried with small groups of students or with a few individual learners in one-to-one situations. After these initial trials, the new materials can be used in normal classrooms. Indeed, the tryout of curriculum materials involve two stages. The pilot and field testing stages. Pilot testing is small scale in which little emphasis is placed at reproducing the conditions of actual classroom use. Students who are engaged in pilot testing should be aware of that it is not they, but the curriculum which is being tested. Students should be encouraged to offer criticisms and suggestions about the curriculum materials.

When pilot testing is over and the curriculum has been modified based on the information from the pilot tests, the curriculum materials are now ready for field testing. Field tests perform both experimental as well as political functions: they serve to evaluate the curriculum and to build support for it. Since field testing, as Gagne points out, involves real classroom conditions and this entails temporary termination of existing programs in those classes selected for the field tests, parental co-operation is required. If the curriculum materials are being tried at school level and not system-wide, as in the case of school-based curriculum development, special permission from central authorities is required.

Many parents see field testing of curriculum materials as an activity which will affect adversely, students' performance. After all, one is trying a curriculum and instructional strategies which have yet to be proven effective under field conditions. In addition, field testing becomes critical in countries like Malawi where students take competitive criterion referenced examinations. This alarm is called for if arrangements are not made with the the Examination Board for special papers for the students in the experimental group.

Just like during the pilot testing stage, formative evaluation as well as summative evaluation are undertaken to provide data on which further modification of the curriculum would be based, and for the terminal judgement about the effectiveness of the materials. In the event of the results of the field tests being proved ineffective, a rejection decision is made. Serious implications arise out of this situation especially if the performance levels of the students have declined. To resolve this situation, the school must effect remedial instruction in the experimental class(es). For future reference, teachers should diagnose the cause(s) of the failure. Through such diagnosis, some insights into the cause(s) of the failure may be gleaned so that future curriculum development efforts can avoid such pitfalls.

After the ninth step, Gagne's model enters into the realm of curriculum implementation. As is the case with curriculum planning and development phases, the latter also overlaps with curriculum implementation activities. Gagne's tenth, eleventh and twelfth steps are in fact curriculum implementation steps. It is not the intention of this study to separate these phases; they are inter-related. But in order to discuss each curriculum process phase in detail, this study has opted for discussing them under separate sections. In fact, according to Miller and Seller (1985) Gagne's model does not provide adequately for curriculum implementation.

Gagne's model has been criticized because of its emphasis on objectives which he claims are value neutral. This approach is primarily oriented to learning basic skills and mastering content as in mastery learning and other individualized programs. High level cognitive skills and integrative curricula cannot easily be reduced to fit into Gagne's system.

Robinson's Model

Robinson, Ross and White (1985) developed a model of curriculum development that was to ensure that inquiry programs could be more easily integrated into the schools' existing curricula in order to promote student growth. In this model they offer seven tasks that teachers and

curriculum workers usually address when they are designing or revamping curricula:

1. Developing goal statements.
2. Developing defensible sets of objectives.
3. Developing descriptions of growth (growth schemes).
4. Developing instructional objectives.
5. Sequencing objectives.
6. Devising growth schemes related to instructional and assessment methods.
7. Developing written curriculum materials.

Robinson and associates, found that curriculum teams need assistance in clarifying the procedures associated with these tasks. The above tasks except for the third and sixth are unique and need further elaboration. There are five basic steps in developing a growth scheme for any objective which are very important in accomplishing task three and six above:

1. Identify a task that calls for a behavior designated by the objective.
2. Administer the task to groups of increasingly greater maturity in respect to this behavior.
3. By comparing performances of groups of different maturity, identify major differences and articulate them as dimensions of growth.
4. Identify describable levels within each dimension (these

also must meet several practical criteria).

5. Where necessary and useful, render this multidimensional growth scheme into a linear sequence.

Three key assumptions are made in this model: Curriculum guidelines do not provide the teacher with much assistance in actually instructing the students about complex intellectual tasks. Thus, it is argued that curriculum guidelines and instructional materials be made more explicit. Second, the task of curriculum design involves matters of choice, such as the selection of objectives and intended learning outcomes. They claim therefore, that the procedure for selecting objectives and outcomes should be grounded in "models" of the problematic situation on the one hand, and in practical results on the other. Finally, the goals of the curriculum developer is to make choices that can be supported with reference to specific criteria. The value of the Robinson model is that it offers the teacher a framework for clarifying goals and objectives and allows the teacher to identify the knowledge and skills that are most important and can thus act as organizers for other concepts and skills in the curriculum. Thus, this model offers field developed procedures for describing growth toward the attainment of educational objectives.

Almost all curriculum models focus on the learner but the degree to which curriculum decisions are based on the

needs and interest of the learner, differ from model to model. For example, some models have sacrificed the learner by basing their decisions on the study of subject matter and drawing generalities about the needs of society. One of the models which is built around the concerns of the learner is Weinstein and Fantini (1970) model.

Weinstein and Fantini's Model

Weinstein and Fantini developed a humanistic model for identity and education. The focus of this model is to ascertain and diagnose learner concerns and then to build lessons around those concerns. This model has eight steps. The first step of this model is to identify the learners. To do this, the students' characteristics, including "developmental (age), economic (lower, middle, or upper income), geographic (rural or urban), cultural, racial or ethnic characteristics" are determined (Weinstein and Fantini, 1970). In this step common characteristics are identified, rather than characteristics unique to the individual.

The second and third step are to ascertain the learners concerns and to diagnose the reasons for these concerns. The word concern connotes an inner uneasiness for the individual and is deeper and more pervasive than a simple interest or feeling. Students' concern often center around issues such as self image and discontentedness.

These concerns can be identified through what the learners say and write about themselves. Through diagnosis, the third step, the teacher attempts to develop ideas for teaching strategies that can meet those concerns.

The fourth step is the development of a set of desired outcomes aimed at meeting some of the concerns. For example, if a student's concern is to have a more positive self image, the teachers would look for behavioral indicators showing that a more positive identify is developing. Sometimes students' statement can be indicative of change in self concept.

The fifth step involves developing a theme to organize the lesson. The organizing idea or theme gives direction and coherence to teaching. The seventh step is the selection of content to achieve the desired outcomes. Several avenues are open to the teachers, including subject disciplines, various media, and field trips. Learning skills, that is, skills that the student needs in order to deal with the content have to be taken into consideration at this stage. Appropriate strategies are developed to bring about the desired outcomes. Weinstein and Fantini emphasize the importance of matching procedures to the learning styles of the students. The final stage involves the evaluation of the effect of the curriculum by asking questions such as these:

> Has the children's behavior changed? Were the content vehicles the best that could have been employed? Were the cognitive skills and teacher procedures the most effective for achieving the effective goals (Weinstein and Fantini, 1970:58).

This model is an attempt to integrate the effective and the cognitive spheres in curriculum development. Obviously, in order to effectively implement this model, decentralized decision making settings, which give the teacher more autonomy in planning for his/her instruction followed by state guidelines, is required.

Curriculum Materials and Effective Learning

Many educational institutions do not rely solely on curriculum materials produced by the system. Commercial publishers produce a lot of curriculum materials in form of texts which are targeted for student's use. Selection and/or preparation for curriculum materials is an important part of the instructional and learning process. Surprisingly, many schools do not place much emphasis on the careful preparation and/or selection of curriculum materials (Stake and Easley, 1978, Clark, 1975, Kuhs and Freeman, 1979, EPIE, 1978). This situation has arisen because some educators claim that curriculum materials do not play a role in effective learning. This, they base on several assumptions: Some educators believe that good teachers do not need "store bought" curriculum materials.

They rely on their knowledge and enthusiasm, supplemented perhaps by a few improvised materials, to "spark off" the learning process (Gall, 1981).

Another school of thought on this issue believes that most teachers are not gifted, and therefore it is important to provide them with high quality curriculum materials. This view led to the trend of the so called "teacher proof" packaged curriculum materials in the fifties and sixties in the United States. Still another view point is that neither teachers nor curriculum materials are important. If students are left alone, they will learn by themselves.

Before proceeding further in trying to link curriculum materials and effective learning, it is important at this juncture to define the term "curriculum materials", because just like the term "curriculum", it is interpreted differently by many education professionals, so is the term curriculum materials.

Many people tend to think of curriculum materials as textbooks, pamphlets, films, slides/tapes, and so on, used in instruction. In order to inquire into the role of curriculum materials in instruction, it is important to be specific and clear about the definition of this term. For the purposes of this study, Gall's technical definition of curriculum materials will be used. She defines Curriculum materials as "physical entities representational in nature, used to facilitate the learning process" (Gall, 1981:5).

The term "physical entities", means that curriculum materials are observable objects, not ideas and concepts. Thus, according to Gall, instructional objectives are not curriculum materials because they are not observable objects. Textbooks and other assorted printed matter - work books, teachers' guides, films and filmstrips - are the most common physical forms of curriculum materials.

Another characteristics, is their intent to facilitate learning. For example, textbooks are generally used for instructional purposes, and therefore are properly classified as curriculum materials. The "representational" nature of curriculum materials means that they signify something other than themselves. For example, a geography textbook has no instructional significance in itself. As a physical object, it is simply a collection of printed pages held together by a binding and cover. The geography text acquires instructional significance because the printed text is used to represent geographical features of land and the conceptual formation processes of those features. Gall says:

> the representational nature of curriculum materials distinguishes them from curriculum supplies. Paper, pencils, scissors, certain types of scientific apparatus [and specimen]... are examples of curriculum supplies rather than of curriculum materials because, even though they support the learning process, they do not represent anything other than themselves (Gall, 1981:5).

Research does not suggest a clear answer to the role of curriculum materials in instruction. The most that can be said is that the role of curriculum materials differs with each teaching situation, varies with the learning outcomes desired, the teacher, the students, and the situational context. In designing any form of instruction, therefore, the teacher and curriculum materials must be seen as two resources that can be drawn upon to help students learn. This assertion challenges the so called "teacher proof" curriculum materials and the view that curriculum materials are not important in instruction and learning. Research on how teachers and curriculum materials vary as instructional resources has shown that while necessary to the instructional process, the role of the teacher and curriculum materials are subservient to the student's own inquiry process. In class discussions, for example, the teacher is the primary resource. He or she moderates the verbal interaction and introduces information when appropriate. Curriculum materials typically play little or no role in this method of instruction. In contrast, curriculum materials play a prominent role in programmed instruction where the teacher's role is secondary.

One of the most common methods used in instruction, especially in secondary education, is teacher lecture accompanied by class work and home work. Both teachers and

curriculum materials play important complementary roles in this method. The last example, is the method of independent inquiry. Students may be asked to formulate a research problem and to collect relevant data. Depending upon the student's level of independence, the teacher may provide relative no assistance while the research is in progress. In some projects, the primary requirement is for the student to collect original data and present them in a report. Under these conditions, the roles of the teacher and curriculum materials, while necessary to the instructional process, are subservient to the student's own inquiry process (Gall, 1981). Thus, the extent of contribution of curriculum materials varies with the instructional task. Nevertheless, because progressive pedagogic practice insist on more student activity and independent inquiry, curriculum materials play significant role in this learning process. In addition, the teacher's effectiveness in all these instructional strategies depend not only on his or her own knowledge and intuition but also on the type of curriculum materials he or she uses prior to going into the class and during instruction.

Whether the effect of curriculum materials on learning is negative or positive depends on the quality of the curriculum materials. Educators are realizing that the content and quality of curriculum materials influence not only what the students learn but how well they learn.

Surprisingly, many schools do not emphasize on the careful selection of curriculum materials. If they do at all, the process is often haphazard and superficial. In centralized educational systems, the selection of some textbooks is done by people other than practicing teachers. As a result, the appropriateness of the curriculum materials recommended for use is often challenged by teachers. While it is true that many of these people have had classroom experience before taking up administrative positions, their past experience does not justify their dominance in the selection process. They still must involve teachers in this task.

Although the research base in this area is very small, some tentative generalizations can be made about the role of curriculum materials in instruction.

1. Instruction is determined by the content of curriculum materials in instruction. With respect to mathematics education, Stake and Easley, (1978) found that the main source of knowledge in instruction is the textbook and its supplemental teacher's manual, suggesting that teachers do not introduce content of their own choosing into classroom instruction.
2. Students spend much of their time interacting with curriculum materials rather than with the teacher. Rosenshine's research findings found out that elementary

school students spend a large amount of their time in classroom doing "seat work" rather than engaged in verbal interaction with teachers (Rosenshine, 1979). Seat work generally involves silent reading assignments or work book activity. As students progress through school, the percentage of time that students interact with materials probably increases. Another survey of 13,000 K-12 teachers conducted by the National Survey and Assessment of Instructional Materials (1976) found that teachers use instructional materials, print and nonprint, during 90 and 95 per cent of their instructional time.

3. Materials that appear to have the same purpose may differ substantially in content coverage. An analysis of fourth grade mathematics textbooks, conducted by Kuhs and Freeman (1979) indicated that they differed from each other in important ways. Many topics found in one textbook were not found in the other textbooks; many of the "core" topics common to all of the textbooks varied in the amount of emphasis that they were given. These findings although limited to one aspect of the K-2 curriculum suggest the importance of carefully examining the content of materials before making an adoption decision.

4. Curriculum materials are not likely to be evaluated and revised prior to publication. Studies by the

Educational Production Information Exchange (EPIE) revealed that less than one per cent of the half million or so curriculum materials sold by the publishing industry have ever been field-tested with students and revised prior to publication. This lack of field-testing implies that many curriculum materials on the market are of unknown effectiveness. Thus, curriculum specialists and teachers have a heavy responsibility of screening materials carefully before making selection decisions. The task of screening materials is even more important in developing countries like Malawi where a good number of curriculum materials used are written and published outside the country. The issue at hand remains that of selecting texts that are relevant to the learner's environment and living world. Admittedly, since some of the texts published in developed countries are specifically written for students in developed countries, it is difficult to find relevant context specific texts for use in the schools. The only solution here is for the local production and publication of curriculum materials tailored to meet the needs of the students and teachers.

5. Teachers limit their search for curriculum materials for those that are immediately available. Clark and his associates (1978) found that teachers tend to limit their search for ideas to immediately available

materials, for example, the teacher edition of textbooks, magazine articles, and films. This research suggests that a careful survey of available materials using access procedures serves to expand the teacher's range of option for classroom instruction.

6. Teachers spend relatively little of their time engaged in the process of materials selection. EPIE Institute found about 45% of the sampled teachers in the survey have no role in choosing the instructional materials that they are required to use. Of those teachers involved in material selection, 54% report that they spend less than one hour per year in this process. Teachers' lack of involvement in selecting materials seems inconsistent with the actual importance of curriculum materials in instruction. The researcher agrees with these findings. As a secondary school teacher in Malawi between 1977 and 1982, he spent about an hour in selecting curriculum materials for geography per year. On many occasions, the list presented was not reflected in the texts chosen for use in schools. The researcher discounts poor choice as the reason for this, but rather, there is little weight given to teachers' choice by the central office.

7. Teachers are not well informed about the process of curriculum material selection. Another finding of the same EPIE survey is that the average teacher has not

been trained to evaluate or to select materials for classroom use. This lack of preparation helps to explain why teachers usually limit their choices to readily available materials and why they spend little time in the selection process.

The above research findings highlight the relative importance of curriculum materials in instruction and dramatize teachers' lack of involvement in selecting curriculum materials. Although these findings are based on research done in the United States, they still can be generalized to developing countries like Malawi.

Among the many strategies for improving schools is the introduction of effective curriculum materials into the school program. This can be done in two ways: careful selection of appropriate curriculum materials already produced by commercial publishers, nonprofit educational agencies, and other organizations and/or the production of curriculum materials by the educational system. Since the context being used here is Malawi, the system can produce materials centrally provided that teachers, university faculty, and other talented members of the general public are involved. For careful selection of materials to be done, in-service education for service teachers is needed because many teachers are not acquainted with systematic procedures of selecting materials. Workshops on writing should be conducted in order to enhance the writing skills

of those teachers who have displayed special talent in their respective teaching subjects.

As has already been noted, selection of curriculum materials is the jurisdiction of the administrators, and sadly what often transpires is that some administrators are mostly concerned with cost and budgeting factors than actual content analysis. Even if they are concerned with content, since they are very much involved in actual teaching, they are not the best judges.

Schools and universities should collaborate in the preparation and/or selection of curriculum materials, and course(s) on evaluating curriculum materials should be part of the curriculum studies topics or subject methodology courses of preservice education programs. One of the reasons why there is poor quality curriculum materials is that non-educational institutions and personnel are sometimes involved in the publication of certain materials. To reverse this trend, and improve the quality of curriculum materials, school/university collaboration is needed. Finally, teacher motivation should not be overlooked. Teachers involved in the preparation of curriculum should be properly rewarded for doing so.

This section of the review, inquired into the relationship between curriculum materials and effective learning. Although research in this area is not very extensive and definitive as regards the direct relationship

between learning and curriculum materials, the evidence cited above should awaken educational professionals about the role curriculum materials play in facilitating learning.

Curriculum Implementation Process

Curriculum development process ends with the field testing and final modification of curriculum materials. The activities that follow are connected with curriculum implementation. Curriculum implementation has not been given specific attention in curriculum literature. There has, therefore, been a gap between the planning and designing of curriculum and the actual implementation of the curriculum. This gap has led to a situation where newly developed materials and practices not being implemented in the school system, and if on the other hand implementation was initiated, it failed to gain ground. According to Gress (1978), the reason for this gap may be related to:

> (1) the assumption implicit in most curriculum engineering literature, which focuses on curriculum planning, (2) the field's lack of direct attention to implementation issues, and (3) confusion about the boundaries between curriculum and instruction (1978:378).

Indeed most of the model reviewed in this study do not place much emphasis to issues of curriculum implementation.

Regarding the confusion and ambiguity between curriculum and instruction, Gress cites Saylor and Alexander (1974) who make curriculum implementation and classroom instruction synonymous:

> Instruction is thus the implementation of the curriculum plan, usually, but not necessarily involving teaching in the sense of student-teacher interaction in school setting (1974:245).

Although instruction is a final outcome of curriculum implementation, there are other crucial activities before ideas and practices finally become a repertoire of curriculum and instructional procedures in the classroom. This section will, review these activities and, since curriculum implementation involves in many respects, new innovations in schools, variables that have been found to hinder or facilitate the introduction of new ideas, objects and practices will also be discussed. Finally, factors related to top-down and bottom-up curriculum implementation will also be explored.

According to Miller and Seller (1985), there are seven primary components of an implementation plan:

1. A study of the new program
2. Identification of resources
3. Role definition
4. Professional development
5. Timelines
6. Communication system
7. Monitoring the implementation (1985).

In principle, other scholars agree with these components, and so, the writer will use the above

components as a framework for discussing the curriculum implementation process.

Implementation plans vary according to the nature and structure of the school systems. Basically, this variability depends on whether the curriculum decision making process is centralized or decentralized. On the latter, the degree of decentralization also matters. For example, curriculum development and implementation procedures centered at district level, are different in nature and complexity than those that are school-based. As far as possible, distinctions will be made regarding these differences.

The initial planning for implementation requires a study of the new program to analyze possible sources of barriers to the introduction of new materials in schools. These barriers usually take place between the development of a new program and its use in the classroom. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) produced by the University of Texas Research and Development Center, for example, identifies a number of concerns people might have with regard to a new program. The CBAM presents two dimensions for describing change: (1) Stages of concern about the innovation (SoC), which describes the feeling of the teacher towards the change, and (2) Levels of use the Innovation (LoU) which describes the performance of the teacher using a new program.

The first dimension has various types and levels of intensity which the user of the innovation experiences (Figure 2.9). If, for example, at the stage of concern 1, the information needed for general awareness of this is not available or is presented in an intimidating manner, the potential user of the innovation may not be interested in the innovation because information about the study curriculum empirically, but for the most part, a Schwab's model will be reviewed in some detail below. characteristics, effects, and requirements of the innovation is not readily available. This is just one example of a barrier whose source is lack of information about the innovation. As can be read from Figure 2.9, the concerns intensify and become more complex for level to level. For example at stage 2, the concerns are personal, at stage 3 they are task-related and from stages 4 to 6, they are impact related concerns. Knowledge of the teachers' particular concerns makes it possible to design implementation activities to address those concerns and hence, remove barriers of change.

Rogers (1962) identifies five major characteristics of a suggested change that will affect its adoption by others:

1. Relative advantage: The degree to which the change is perceived to be an improvement over present practice.

6. **Refocussing**: The focus is one exploration of more universal benefits from the innovation, including the possibility of major changes or replacement with a more powerful alternative. Individual has definite ideas about alternatives to the proposed or existing form of the innovation.
5. **Collaboration**: The focus is on coordination and cooperation with others regarding use of the innovation.
4. **Consequence**: Attention focuses on impact of the innovation on student in his/her immediate sphere of influence. he focus is on relevance of the innovation for students, evaluation of student outcomes, including performance and competencies, and changes needed to increase student outcomes.
3. **Management**: Attention is focused on the processes and tasks of using the innovation and the best use of information and resources. Issues related to efficiency, organizing, managing, scheduling, and time demands are utmost.
2. **Personal**: Individual is uncertain about the demands of the innovation, his/her inadequacy to meet those demands, and his/her role with the innovation. This includes analysis of his/her role in relation to the reward structure of the organization, decision making, and consideration of potential conflicts with existing structures or personal commitment. Financial or status implications of the program for self and colleagues may also be reflected.
1. **Informational**: A general awareness of the innovation and interest in learning more detail about it is indicated. The person seems to be unworried about himself/herself in relation to the innovation. She/he is interested in substantive aspects of the innovation in a selfless manner such as general characteristics, effects, and requirements for use.
0 **Awareness**: Little concern about or involvement with innovation is indicated.

Figure 2.9: Stages of Concern about Innovation.

Source: Hall, G.E. and Loucks, S.F. "Teacher Concerns as a Basis for Facilitating and Personalizing Staff Development." Teachers College, 80 (1), 1978:41.

2. Compatibility: The congruity between the values implied by the change and those values present among the people who must implement the change.
3. Complexity: The ease with which the change can be understood and then applied;
4. Divisibility: Some programs can be implemented by breaking them into smaller units.
5. Communicability: The ease with which the effects of the change can be shared with others.

Rogers' characteristics are similar to the type of concerns a potential adopter has of the innovation as illustration in the CBAM model.

Writing on the same issue of barriers to implementation, Fullan and Park (1981) have identified 12 factors that affect implementation of new programs (Figure 2.10). These factors hinder or facilitate the use of a new program. Just like others, Fullan and Park point out that careful planning of the implementation is necessary to avoid potential barriers. Teachers, curriculum specialists, administrators must be involved during the planning sessions to clarify issues and identify solutions. This type of cooperative planning is more workable under decentralized settings. In fact, in school based curriculum development and implementation systems, where the need to introduce a new program is internally generated at school level, change is likely to be more widely

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INNOVATION OR REVISION
1. Need for the Change
2. Clarity, complexity of the Change
3. Quality and availability of materials
B. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM LEVEL
4. History of innovative attempts
5. Expectations and training for principals
6. Teacher input and professional development (in-service, technical assistance)
7. Board and community support
8. Time line and monitoring
9. Overload
C. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL LEVEL
10. Principal's actions
11. Teacher/teacher relations and actions
D. FACTORS EXTERNAL TO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM
12. Role of the Ministry of Education and educational agencies.

Figure 2.10: Factors Affecting Implementation.

Source: Fullan, M., and Park, P. Curriculum Implementation: A Resource Booklet. Toronto, Ontario Ministry of Education, 1981.

accepted because it is a response to a need identified by teachers within the system.

On the contrary, in many centralized systems, administrators at the central office have the implementation plan which in the first place, was drawn with little or no input from teachers. However, certain centralized settings allow for this participation to take place. One way of trying to avoid this dichotomy of centralized versus decentralized is to use Mintzberg's (1979) description of two types of school organizational settings that co-exist but are not mutually exclusive, namely: the traditional bureaucratic setting and the professionally bureaucratic setting.

In traditionally bureaucratic settings, ideally, the administrator has a plan prescribing teacher relations with other teacher or with students, and delegates tasks on the basis of the plan. The teachers as beneficiaries of the organization's rewards, consent and act. The administrator has recourse to use the appropriate organizational sanctions to bring about teacher compliance. This is a setting where there is very little participation of teachers in curriculum development and implementation. According to Common (1983) curriculum planning, development and implementation in this setting is top-down.

In the professionally bureaucratic setting, relations between the teachers and administrators are ideally shaped

by the notion of professional expertise and excellence and are defined in terms of "structural looseness" (Mintzberg, 1979). Here, the teacher is assumed to be a professional who has expertise and, because of it, is granted considerable autonomy to act in a self determined fashion. Authority rests on professional knowledge and competency and not merely on experience and seniority. In this professionally bureaucratic setting, clearly teachers have power, both of choice and action.

To summarize, several factors should be borne in mind during the initial stages of implementing a curriculum:

1. The new program must be examined to identify specific impact that is anticipated. The need for change, as perceived by teachers, parents, school administrators, and consultants will determine the degree of commitment to the implementation activities. The meeting of the minds about change can only come about through deliberataive process.
2. The new program should identify its potential impact on teacher beliefs, methodologies and resources in order to make it possible to design implementation activities that will address teachers concerns and thus remove potential barriers to the innovation.
3. Both explicit and implicit changes that will result from an innovation should be carefully examined. If the new

program implies many changes in what teachers will teach or how they will teach, major changes can be anticipated in the school and its social environment, whereas, a new program that is similar to present practice will result only in minor changes.

4. Right from the outset, there should be provision for support in order to assist teachers to move smoothly from one level of the implementation process to the next.

The second stage of the implementation process is the identification of resources. The identification of resources encompasses three areas (1) print and audio visual resources, like textbooks, teaching materials, (2) human resources, and (3) financial resources. Resources preparation for adoption is sometimes ignored by many curriculum improvement projects, leading to the failure of what may have been successful innovative solutions. There have been cases where basic and sound solution which were attempted by competent teachers during the trial stage, or proven viable by other school systems, have failed because budgetary adjustments were not made by the system to cover the cost of curriculum materials and supplies, and to take care of extra remuneration for personnel.

Curriculum consultants have played and continue to play important roles in curriculum development projects. Although such people can be very helpful, McLaughlin and

Marsh (1978) point out that information gathered by the Rand Change Agent Study, shows the importance of choosing consultants of high quality:

> It was better for projects to use no outside consultants than to use poor ones - and much better than to use poor ones. Good consultants helped by providing concrete practical advice to project teachers - showing how to adopt project methods or materials to their own situation. Good consultants assisted teachers in learning how to solve problems for themselves, rather than by solving problems for them. Ineffective consultants often furnished advice abstract to be useful (1978:78).

The time in which the consultant spends on a project also matters. This is especially so in the developing countries where a good proportion of the consultants come from developed countries. Because of the short time they spend working with the project, more often than not, by the time they are having a feel about the problem(s) that resulted in the need for change, and coming to grips with strategies to effectively implement the innovation, their contract is over. Worse still, some consultants bring an innovation "blueprint" and superimpose it on the problem(s) being faced by the school systems. In certain cases, the innovation and the problem(s) faced by the school system are not compatible.

Role definition is the third component of an implementing plan. Curriculum implementation involves a lot of people from different parts of the system. Role

clarification and description helps to ensure that important tasks are not overlooked. For example, a person at the central office may be assigned with the job of ordering curriculum materials and supplies. The school administrator may be assigned with the role of coordinating implementing activities at school level. Other responsibilities of coordinating the implementation would be assigned to central office supervisors while planning for professional development would be the responsibility of staff from a curriculum development center.

The teacher being key to the implementation of the program in class, has complex roles. It is important, therefore, for teachers to know what is expected of other non-teaching personnel during implementation. In any complex organization such as the school, some roles overlap between personnel. Clearly outlined responsibilities defining boundaries of responsibility and in ascertaining the degree to which certain roles overlap is warranted. The maximization of co-operative planning in those overlap areas is advisable in order to avoid duplication of efforts and "territorial fights."

The fourth component of the implementation plan is professional development, and is central to successful implementation of curriculum projects. Staff development activities should essentially be tied to the school. In

this school-based staff development, the head of the school serves as the instructional leader in the context of strengthening the school curriculum by giving clear messages that teachers may take responsibilities for their professional growth. Nevertheless, the central office or its intermediary ought to provide support for such growth.

Staff training activities are skill specific, such as procedures in how to use a new reading program or how to introduce new mathematical materials. In-service educational workshops are usually mounted for such activities. In centralized systems, these workshops are centrally or regionally organized. The problem with this approach is that not all teachers can be involved in the in-service program. The rationale behind most centrally organized in-service program is that there will be a "trickle-down" effect of the knowledge and skills from the workshop center(s) to the schools. However, evidence from practice has shown that this trickle down or "ripple effect" does not take place to the magnitude envisaged by the organizers. What is perhaps needed are carefully planned and coordinated workshops from the central to the local school level and the availability of sufficient resources to conduct them. The dissemination of ideas and practices emanating from these workshops to the school level, requires careful coordination and follow-up by central office and regional or district level curriculum

supervisors, on the one hand, and committed effective instructional leadership at the school level, on the other.

Timeline or implementation schedule, sets intermediate goals as benchmarks against which the progress of the implementation can be assessed. According to Miller and Seller, time for the examination of necessary curriculum, for allowing people to feel comfortable with the change, for trying out the new program and revising it if necessary, and for settling into new teaching methodologies, must all be accommodated. Full implementation of a program can take three years or longer, therefore it is imperative to specify datelines of all activities in the plan. Timelines also facilitate the proper sequences of events and tasks. They also make role expectations explicit in terms of when particular functions are to be completed. Flexibility will allow alterations when necessary, but a well-planned timeline can offer protection against administrative pressure to speed up the implementation process (Miller and Seller, 1985).

The last but one component is communication system. Implicitly, this has been conveyed in the other components of the curriculum implementation process. Many writers on curriculum implementation and change process argue for a well defined communication system to facilitate discussion about the new program among teachers, school administrators, and curriculum workers. Two way flow of

information between the change agents and users or between the central office and the school, can help in reducing feeling of isolation during the implementation. Horizontal informational flow ought to be articulate as well so as to give teachers opportunities to talk to others and share about problems being faced in implementing the curriculum and ways of overcoming them. The mere communication with others reminds users that they are not alone in the task of implementing the program and the problems that they are confronting are also faced by their counterparts in other schools.

Planning the communication system begins with the identification of what information will be required, who is the target audience to the information, and when it will be needed. The communication system has two parts. One part is for normal routing system to ensure that the essential information is passed between teachers and central curriculum committees and administrative personnel. One of the most commonly used channel for communicating curriculum ideas and practices, are written curriculum guides. Westbury (1983), agrees with Walker (1980) that:

> whether they be prescriptive syllabi or 'guidelines', monographs or books which report ideas which are thought worthy of school or classroom use, or calls to action, are and will remain core components of the communicating systems which surround teachers (1983:1).

However, Westbury like others believes that curriculum researchers and writers know much less than they might about how written curriculum guides can and should be conceived and organized so that their potential as a communicative media might be optimized. He sees, therefore, the need to conduct research into these areas to find out what communicative devices offer the greatest hope of giving teachers some practical understanding of the ideas a writer or curriculum developer has in mind, what goes into persuading teachers to think about trying new ideas, and whether such ideas and curricular practices can be communicated by the written media alone. The answers to these issues are important because written materials represent, when contrasted to in-service courses, workshops, and the like, a potentially most cost-effective way of influencing teachers.

The other more important part of the communication system involves networks. These networks consist of group of teachers, school administrators and/or curriculum workers who regularly share experiences, set joint problem-solving groups, and circulate information about the implementation of the new program.

The last component is monitoring the implementation. The purpose of monitoring is to gather information related to the implementation and to use this information to maintain the level of effectiveness on an on-going basis

and also to facilitate and support the efforts of the teachers. Although great care may have been taken through all the stages of the curriculum implementation stages, problems will still arise as teachers continue using the new program. It is, therefore, imperative that guidance be provided in the schools by appropriate personnel like supervisors and curriculum workers.

In fact, supervision is a key element in all components discussed in this section. Kathryn Feyeiresen and others (1970) have developed a supervisory system that includes designing the curriculum, providing teachers with advice, and helping teachers with problem of teaching and learning. These authors recommend the systems approach because it integrates elements of supervisory strategy into a single plan.

Another way of helping teachers at this stage is for the monitoring team to familiarize the teachers with what types of evaluative data will be required to gauge the effectiveness of the curriculum once the curriculum is institutionalized. Monitoring constitutes a formative evaluation of the implementation. Summative evaluation is inevitably necessary at the end of the implementation in order to appraise how successful the curriculum has been in overcoming the problem(s) that the school system encountered. The results of this type of evaluation also marks the gradual beginning of identifying, diagnosing and

searching for solutions of other problems unrelated to the original problems the system was working on. In other words, the curriculum improvements process is an on-going enterprise.

Curriculum Evaluation

The term "evaluation" has been given diverse interpretations in education as to what it means and also what purposes it renders to education. The first part of this section aims at looking at the range of meanings of the terms has been given by scholars in the field and the purpose they see it playing in education. Out of this review, a more meaningful understanding of evaluation, it is hoped, working definition will emerge. The second part of the section, reviews selected curriculum models.

The Meaning of Curriculum Evaluation

Literature in curriculum today shows that different and similar viewS about the meaning of evaluation has come about because of the various viewS people have about the purpose of education, the level of abstraction they render the term, the specific concerns that these scholars have or had when they formulated their definitions, and also the idiosyncracies that typifies people.

A logical start in the review of meanings of evaluation is to start with Ralph Tyler because he is the

one who coined the term "evaluation" in education in the 1930's. Tyler conceived evaluation as the process of determining the degree to which the goals of a program have been achieved. Here, evaluation was conceptualized as a comparison of intended and actual outcomes. This objective-based evaluation is reflected in his curriculum rationale (1949).

Although many writers have classified his conceptualization as objective-based, a closer look at his rationale indicates that he was not only interested in evaluating outcomes of learning, but also the learning process in order to bring about program improvement. Popham (1975), defineS evaluation as "the assessment of merit". Unfortunately his definition is less clear because it is only when one comes to terms with the meaning of "assessment" and the value laden word "merit" that one can understand his definition. However, like Tyler, Popham's definition is orientated towards the learner's proficiency which can be gauged by comparing intended objectives and outcomes of an evaluation program.

Scriven (1970), defineS evaluation as "the systematic and objective determination of the worth of an object". He says that without judgement of merit, no evaluation has taken place. While agreeing with Popham on the issue of "merit", he disassociates himself from the notion of goal-based evaluation. Instead, he comes up with the idea of

"goal-free evaluation". Scriven, was concerned that evaluators who were preoccupied with the intended outcomes of a program, would ignore the wide range of actual outcomes which intended or not, are nevertheless real and important. This approach was not really conceptualized to replace the goal-based evaluation, but rather to augment it by assessing the quality of the goals established on the one hand, and ensuring that the unintended or emerging dimensions in the learning process on the other, are also evaluated. Scriven's definition is very similar to Beeby's, who describes evaluation as "the systematic collection and interpretation of evidence, leading as part of process to a judgement of value with a view to action: (1978). Both scholars use the term "systematic" and Scriven's phrase "objective determination of the merit of an object", has similar connotation to Beeby;s "interpretation of evidence [leading] to a judgement of value." The term "systematic" implies that what information is needed will be defined with some degree of precision and that efforts to secure such information will be planned. By "objective determination of evidence [leading] to a judgement of value," both scholars say that mere collection of evidence, however systematic, does not by itself constitute evaluation work. Evaluation according to them goes beyond mere description of what is happening but that judgement about the worth of an educational

endeavor be made. It is only when Beeby adds the phrase "with a view to action", that we see him introduce the dynamic of decision-oriented evaluation like that advocated by Cronbach and Stufflebeam. This makes the distinction between evaluation which results in a judgement of value with no specific reference to action, to one which is undertaken for the sake of present and future action.

Stake (1976), writing on evaluation joins the ranks of Tyler, Popham and Scriven by specifying description and judgement as the two basic ingredients of evaluation. Dressel (1976), while belonging to this group of scholars which place premium on judgement of outcomes, broadens the definition to include process. To Dressel, evaluation is "both judgement of the worth of a program, procedure or individual activity and the process whereby that judgement is made."

At the other end of the conceptual continuum, are those scholars who view the function of evaluation as going beyond the making of judgment about the worth of education outcomes, to placing evaluation within the context of decision making. Cronbach (1963), advocating this idea, defined evaluation as "[the] collection and use of information to make decisions about an educational program" (in Taylor and Cowley, 1972:11). By "educational program" he meant a set of locally or nationally developed instructional materials, and instructional activities of a

single school or the educational experience of a single learner. Cronbach also suggests that another purpose of evaluation is program improvement. The evaluation process is, in other words, undertaken to facilitate the making of effective decisions for improving a program.

Wolf (1984), analyzing Cronbach's statement, notes two elements of interest: The first, "the collection and use of information:, puts equal emphasis on what type of data to be collected, how to collect it and what value those data will be to the decision maker. The second element of Cronbach's definition "to make decisions", connotes an action orientation. "Evaluation should lead to action as opposed to conclusions not acted upon" (Wolf, 1984). On the issue of decisions, Cronbach comes up with the three types of decisions for which evaluation is used:

1. Course improvement: Deciding what instructional materials and methods are satisfactory, and where change is needed.
2. Decisions about individuals" Identifying the needs of the [learner] for the sake of planning his/her instruction; judging [learner] merit for purposes of selection and grouping; acquainting with [learner] with his/her own progress.
3. Administrative regulation: Judging how the system is, how good individual teachers are, etc.

It is only when one analyses the three types of decisions above that one appreciates Cronbach's statement that "evaluation is a diversified activity and that no one set of principles [and methods] will suffice". Talking about methods, the decision-oriented framework brings in qualitative data collection procedures, like the use of interviews, questionnaires, observation, etc. when gathering data for certain decisions, and the use of quantitative instruments for other decisions. In other words, the evaluator must make sure that it is not the methods of data collection that should determine the results, but rather, the type of decision that is to be made should determine the type of instruments to be used.

Stufflebeam (1969), agrees with Cronbach by defining evaluation as "a process of providing useful information for decision making:. Guba (1970), writing a joint paper with Stufflebeam refines the latter's original statement by defining evaluation as "the process of delineating, obtaining and providing information for judging decision alternatives". The writer is of the view that the decision-oriented evaluation should be the operational paradigm for evaluators and that the definitions of Cronbach, Stufflebeam and Guba, should be used to guide evaluators because they focus on program improvement.

Defining evaluation <u>per se</u>, is not enough because the term has often been associated, rightly or wrongly, with

the terms measurement, assessment, and research. The following, therefore, is an attempt to draw distinctions between these terms.

Measurement is the act or process of determining the extent, dimensions, quantify, or capacity of something at one point in time, like the weight, length, and volume of physical objects. In education, measurement is the act of determining the extent to which an individual has learned or the degree to which he/she possesses a certain characteristic ability or talent, without placing values on these characteristics. On the contrary, studies in evaluation are undertake precisely because they represent educational values. Objectives, for example are educational values. They define what we seek to develop in learners as a result of exposing them to a set of educational experiences. Thus, while evaluation and measurement specialists often engage in similar acts such as gathering information about learner performance, the fundamental difference between the two lies in the value that is placed on what is being investigated (Wolf, 1984). Another basic distinction between the two terms is one of purpose. Evaluation is directed towards describing effects of treatments; measurement towards description and comparison of individuals with regard to some characteristics. On the contrary, studies in evaluation are undertaken precisely because they represent educational

values. Objectives, for example, are educational values. They define what we seek to develop in learners as a result of exposing them to a set of educational experiences. Thus, while evaluation and measurement specialists often engage in similar acts such as gathering information about learner performance, the fundamental difference between the two lies in the value that is placed on what is being investigated (Wolf, 1984). Another basic distinction between the two terms is one of purpose. Evaluation is directed towards describing effects of treatments; measurement towards description and comparison of individuals with regard to some characteristics.

Closely related to the notion of measurement is assessment. Assessment is the appraisal of the proficiency of learners for the purposes of diagnosis, clarification, and grading. Assessment goes beyond measurement in that it involves qualitative judgement of determining what and how to measure as well as the process of putting data into an interpretable form. In their comparison of the three terms, Anderson and associates (1969) are right by claiming that assessment has a narrower meaning than evaluation and a broader meaning than measurement.

Evaluation and research share a number of common characteristics, although there are some notable differences too. Research typically aims at producing new knowledge which may have no specific reference to any

practical decision value, while evaluation is deliberately undertaken to act as a guide to action. Another basic distinction lies in generalizability of results that each type of activity produces. Research is concerned with the production of knowledge that is generalizable as possible. Evaluation, in contrast, seeks to produce knowledge specific to a particular setting (Wolf, 1984). Evaluators, for example, concerned with the evaluation of a science improvement program for high school students in a single school, will devote their efforts towards ascertaining the effectiveness of the program in that locality. The results of the study may be relevant to the school personnel of that school and may not necessarily have "external validity" for other schools. Another important distinction between evaluation and research lies in the area of methods.

In research there are fairly well developed canons, principles, procedures, and techniques for the conduct of such studies. These methods serve to ensure the production of dependable and generalizable results. While the methods of research may serve as a guide to evaluation, the "rigor" of the former is neither necessary nor practicable. Although the evaluation studies may lack the precision of research studies, their purpose is to provide information for making choices among alternatives.

The above discussion was intended to clarify the concept of evaluation and to clear the ground for the review of selected evaluation models.

Curriculum Evaluation Models

Just like the meanings people give to evaluation are diverse, so are the models of evaluation that try to operationalize these meanings. It is not the intention of the writer to review all curriculum evaluation models, but rather to articulate some key models in which the basic concepts, elements, principles, procedures and purposes of evaluation are discussed.

Basically, the models that are going to be reviewed fall into broad categories of purpose: Judgmental and decision oriented evaluations (Figure 2.11). However, this does not mean that those models that emphasize judging the worth of a curriculum or instruction have no decision making purposes and those that are decision oriented are not judgmental. This categorization has been based on the key emphasis each evaluation model lays.

Ralph Tyler's Evaluation Model

Ralph Tyler's evaluation model should be looked at in the light of his rational curriculum model, already discussed. Tyler's evaluation model lays its emphasis on instructional objectives:

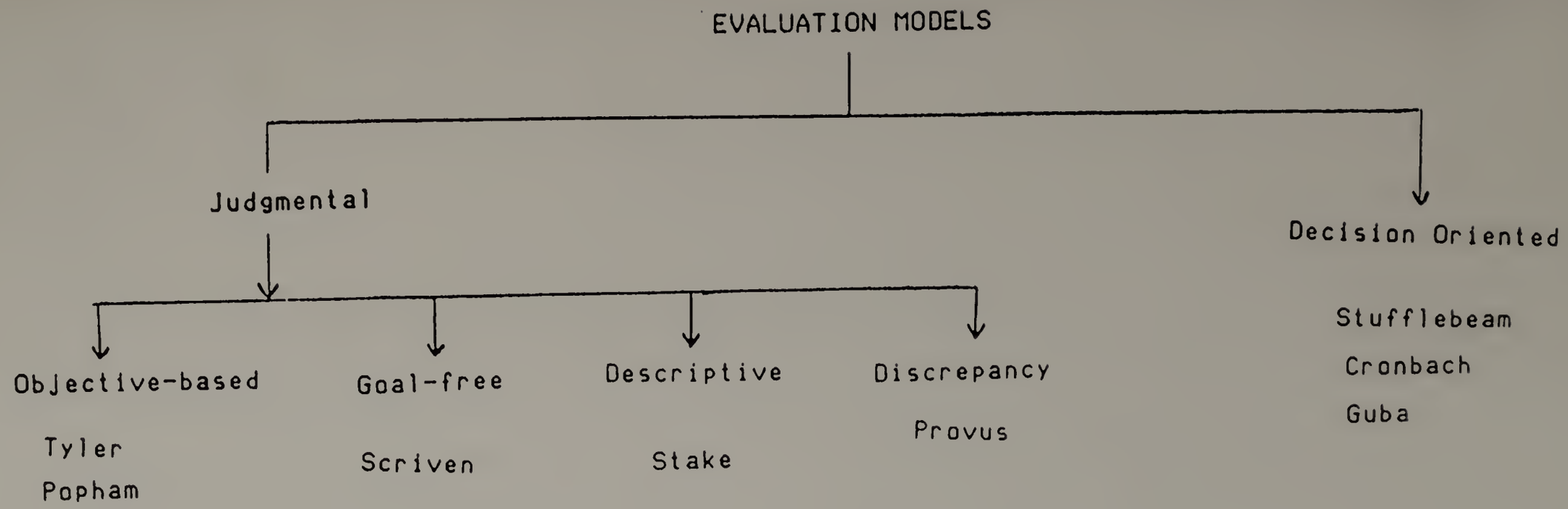

Figure 2.11: Evaluation Models as they Relate to Purpose

> The process of evaluation is essentially the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually being realized by the program of curriculum and instruction. However, since educational objectives are essentially changes in human beings, that is, the objectives aimed at are to produce certain desirable changes in the behavioral patterns of the student, then evaluation is the process of determining the degree to which these changes in behavior are actually taking place (1981:239).

The conception of evaluation has two important aspects. In the first place, it implies that evaluation must appraise the behavior of the student since it is change in these behaviors that is sought in education. In the second place, it implies that evaluation must involve more than a single appraisal at any one time to see whether change has taken place. Tyler, emphasizes the necessity of making an appraisal at an early point and other appraisals at later points, to identify changes that are occurring in the students.

According to Tyler, there are four different stages of curriculum development in which evaluation can be undertaken in order to check the effectiveness of a program. The first stage is one involving the evaluation of ideas proposed for developing a program, a set of materials, or an instructional device. Here, evaluation should be undertaken to find out whether there is any evidence from earlier experiments or experience that indicates the probably effectiveness of the idea. This is

very important because much wasted effort is likely to be avoided by evaluation at the idea stage (Tyler, 1975).

The second stage is evaluating the implementation stage. When a new idea or practice is introduced in the school, it is important to check in the schools whether or not the plan is being implemented or not. In a study of activity schools in which Tyler was involved in New York city in 1942, for example, he found that half the classrooms in these schools were actually carrying on activity programs. In trying to come with reasons why this is so, Tyler says:

> In some cases this is due to lack of understanding of the essential features of the plan, so that the implementation lacks salient conditions essential to the idea. In other cases those implementing the plan feel that it will not work, and so they establish a program that they feel is better. There are even cases where an old procedure is continued while it is professed while the new idea is in operation (1975:31).

A third stage in which evaluation contributes to the effectiveness of the curriculum is during its actual operation, both in guiding its development during early trials and also in monitoring its continuing use. This stage is actually related to the second stage.

Finally, evaluation needs to be conducted to find out the extent to which students are actually developing the patterns of behavior that the curriculum was designed to help them learn. There are several methods that can be

used in getting evidence about behavioral changes in the students, for example, paper and pencil tests, observations, interviews and questionnaires. The paper-pencil tests provide a practical procedure for getting evidence about several kinds of students behavior. But this type of instrument has limitations when it comes to affective behavior.

In addition to tests, observations are mentioned as useful devices to get certain kinds of operational skills. Interviews and questionnaires are useful instruments for evaluating attitudes and interests. Another notion that Tyler suggests for use is sampling. Sampling is not only involved in appraising the individual's behavior, but it may also be involved in appraising the effectiveness of the curriculum in use with a group of students. Since it is very time consuming to assess all the students in order to see that the effect the curriculum is producing, a well defined sample of students...

> "...may - within small limits of error - properly represent the kinds of result that would have been obtained had all the students been involved in the evaluation" (Tyler, 1981:241).

Three criteria for any evaluation are emphasized in this model, namely, objectivity, reliability and validity. Validity is seen as the most important criteria of an evaluation instrument because it applies to the method and

indicates the degree to which evaluation instruments actually provide evidence of the behavior desired.

Evaluating the curriculum or students is one thing and using the results of an evaluation is another. According to Tyler, evaluation results should be used to modify and improve the curriculum and instructional program. Evaluation procedures also have great importance in the individual guidance of students and providing information about the success of a program to the school's clientele.

One criticism that has been levelled against this model is that sometimes the evaluator is trapped within the statement of intent of the program builder. In this situation, the evaluator merely feeds back evidence of "shortfall" allowing the curriculum designer to "vary the treatment" until the student's behavior matches the prespecified objectives.

Tyler's evaluation model is an example of a model which seeks to make value judgments about the worth of the curriculum This in fact implies decision making. Evaluation in education should not only pinpoint students needs but also guide curriculum decision makers in selecting new materials, procedures, and organization patterns. Curriculum decisions in education are conditioned by our perceptions of how we are doing and evaluation shape our perceptions. Therefore, systems of evaluation like Tyler's are needed in order to relay back

to every level concerned with the educational process, the kinds of data needed to improve these perceptions and, consequently, to improve curriculum choices.

Michael Scriven's Goal Free Evaluation Model

This model, in direct contrast to Tyler's approach, looks at the processes and procedures (i.e. intrinsic evaluation) as well as outcomes to determine the worth or values of the subject being evaluated. Goal-free evaluation prevents an evaluator from getting confused between a program's "rhetoric of intent" and its evidence of success. Criticizing the "objectives-based evaluation", and propounding his model, Scriven says:

> ...consideration of and evaluation of goals was an unnecessary but also a possibly contaminated step. I began to work on an alternative approach - simply the evaluation of actual effects against (typically) a profile of demonstrated needs in this region of education. This is close to what the Consumer's Union actually does. I call this goal-free evaluation (1972:1).

In order to effect this goal-free evaluation, Scriven introduced a "product checklist" which according to him could serve equally well for evaluating procedures or proposals. The status of the checkpoints on the checklist is that failure to come up to scratch, is an absolute disqualification for the product. This indeed is analogous to quality control for manufactured products.

Scriven also proposed in his model a now constantly used distinction between "formative" and "summative" evaluation. Formative evaluation is investigatory in nature no matter which elements of the curriculum are being examined, and provides information that increases an understanding of curriculum problems and possibilities. The evaluation is undertaken to provide frequent, detailed and specific information to guide program development. The information gathered in formative evaluation contributes to the revision of a program; it allows curriculum developers to make changes and to improve the curriculum before it assumes its final form. At instructional level, teachers, are involved in formative evaluation when they critically examine what they do with a view to improve learning. Summative evaluation, on the other hand, reports relative levels of success and failure according to specified criteria, standards or values and is not intended primarily to provide information for subsequent modification and development of the curriculum. The data from summative evaluation is used in deciding, for example, whether to continue, discontinue, or implement a program.

Since goals are derived from needs, the goal-free evaluation model can usefully supplement the goal-based evaluation model, rather than as an alternative "prototype".

Robert Stake's Countenance Evaluation Model

The purpose of Robert Stake's model, also known as the Contingency-Congruence model, is to provide a framework for the development of an evaluation plan. The plan calls for attending to three phases of an educational program: antecedent, transaction and outcome phases. Antecedents are conditions existing prior to instruction that may be related to outcomes; transactions constitute the process of instruction, and outcomes are the effects of the program. Stake emphasizes two operations, descriptions and judgments. Complete descriptive information must be gathered, including information about student achievement and the descriptions for instructional practices and the relationship between these two factors. These descriptions are divided according to whether they refer to what was intended or what actually was observed. Judgmental data are the opinions held by various local groups as well as the opinions of experts in the particular subject fields. From these opinions standards (acceptable levels of participation, achievement, or understanding), can be extracted and the curriculum can be evaluated against them.

Stake's evaluation model is compatible with shared curriculum decision making strategy in that it is more sensitive to the different values of program participants, and allows for more participation in the making of

judgments. Among the many things that Stake championed or popularized are:

1. The notion that evaluation could provide valuable information by describing and "portraying" a wide variety of elements associated with a program or events being examined (in particular, "antecedents", "transactions" and a wide range of outcomes).
2. The inclusion of values and judgments and views of people involved in the program.
3. The incorporation of both formal and informal techniques.
4. The importance of evaluation strategies being suited or responsive to both the particular problem and to the needs of those wanting the information.
5. The idea of examining logical consistencies among aims, intended processes and hoped for outcomes.
6. The idea of examining congruencies among intentions, actual processes and actual outcomes.

Since he developed this model, Stake has made explorations into qualitative approaches to evaluation. He has, for example, concurred with Eisner by suggesting that some evaluations needs to be conveyed through artistic media in order to convey the uniqueness of the curriculum being evaluated.

Provus' Discrepancy Model

According to Malcom Provus, "evaluation is primarily a comparison of program performance with expected or designed program, and secondly, among many other things, a comparison of client performance with expected client outcomes" (Provus, 1971:12). By "discrepancy" Provus refers to the search for differences between two or more elements or variables of an education/training program that, according to logical, rational, or statistical criteria, should be in agreement or correspondence. Reconciling any differences that are found may then become a major program objective. Discrepancy evaluation efforts may focus on a wide variety of program elements or variables. Six of the most frequent areas of application are described below:

1. Discrepancy between program plans or intentions and actual program operations. A number of nicely designed evaluation studies have overlooked this simple requirement and have produced either "false negative" or ambiguous results. In many programs, discrepancies exist between what was planned or intended with that actually takes place in practice. For example, in programs where time and materials are important variables for success, delayed delivery of textbooks and the local variations in the time alloted to instruction by various schools from a say a minimum of 3 lessons a

week instead of the recommended 5 lessons a week, render the whole effort of evaluation invalid if such discrepancies are not unearthed.

2. Discrepancies between predicted and obtained program outcomes. Evaluation with this focus proceed from the question "Do the students change in the direction and amount that they were expected to change?" Expectations may empirically based (for example, derived from relationships between entry or pretest performance and criterion or post test performance for preceding classes of students), or they may be rationally derived.
3. Discrepancy between student status and desired standards of competency. Evaluation of discrepancies between the existing situation and the desired state of affairs also goes by the name of needs assessment and frequently provides the stimulus for development of new or imported educational or training programs.
4. Goal discrepancies. The term discrepancy evaluation is also applied to studies of consistencies (and inconsistencies) in the goal values held by different parties to an educational or training endeavor - for example, across difference administrative levels in the program stage (say teachers versus principals). If relevant and significant groups differ widely in what they think the goal and emphasis of a program should be,

these differences will almost surely surface without any specific study.

5. Discrepancy between hypothetically interchangeable parts of an educational program. For example, the evaluator might look at possible differences among multiple class offerings of the same subject - say, first year geometry and ask the question - Are these offerings similar? Do different instructors have different emphasis and curriculum coverages? Is it fair to assume that all students who complete first-year geometry have comparable instructional backgrounds from which to begin the study of second-year geometry.
6. Systems inconsistencies. This is a more global application of discrepancy evaluation and in a sense incorporates some of the applications listed above. It asks whether there are inconsistencies in the logic or organization of the total program, for example, among program objectives, instructional procedures, and measures used to assess student progress. Unfortunately, it is not unusual for a program to claim that it is fostering higher-order understandings when, in fact, it emphasizes rote learning.

Provus' model can help in making decisions at two different levels: (1) Policy making or administrative level, and (2) Program development and implementation

level. Provus (1972) described the relationship between these levels in this way:

> Evaluation is the handmaiden of program development and quiet counsellor to administrators - but it operates in accordance with its own set of rules and on an authority independent of the program unit (in Miller and Seller, 1985:310).

Daniel Stufflebeam's CIPP Model

Daniel Stufflebeam strengthened the relationship made earlier by Cronbach, between evaluation and decision making. Stufflebeam spelt out the need for evaluations to help in "planning", "programming", "implementing" and "recycling" decisions. According to Stufflebeam and associates, planning decisions, may involve discontinuing, changing, or maintaining the program. If a planning decision requires a change in curriculum, then there is need for the second type of decision-programming or structuring decisions - which involve activity that will bring about change. The third type of decision - implementing decisions - are made during the implementation of the change. These decisions rest on whether actual practices coincide with desired practices and whether modifications of the implementation procedures are required. Finally, recycling decisions are made after the effectiveness of the change has been determined. These decisions specify whether the change is to be incorporated into the curriculum or modified and tried again.

In order to come up with these four types of decisions data is needed on which to base the decisions. The evaluation model has four types of evaluation: context, input, process and product.

1. Context Evaluation:

Context evaluation serves decision making for the planning of an on-going program by describing and defining actual and desired conditions. The main objectives of this type of study are to assess the object's overall status, to identify its deficiencies, to inventory the strength at hand that could remedy the deficiencies. It is diagnostic in nature and attempts to discover discrepancies between program goals and objectives. Whatever the focal object, the result of a context evaluation should provide a sound basis for adjusting its existing goals and priorities and targeting needed changes.

2. Input Evaluation:

The main orientation of an input evaluation is to help prescribe a program by which to bring about needed changes. It serves decision makers concerned with making the program goals operational, where the goals were previously identified and clarified by context evaluation. In other words, input evaluation provides information about the means necessary and available to reach the ends (program goals). It describes the

resources available and determines the best use of those resources in terms of costs and benefits, resulting in a design meeting its goals.

3. Process Evaluation:

In essence a process evaluation if an on-going check on the implementation of a plan. It serves day to day decision making needs required to carry out a program. It provides feedback to the producers and managers of a program, so that they can monitor the operations and detect and predict potential problems in design or implementation. Process evaluation has similar functions of formative evaluation. Process evaluation requires an eclectic evaluation methodology not only participant observation, but interactive analysis, open ended reports, interviews, rating scales, diaries, etc. According to Hamilton (1976), process evaluation is called illuminative evaluation.

4. Production Evaluation:

The purpose of product evaluation is to measure, interpret, and judge the attainments of a program by ascertaining the extent to which the program has met the needs of the group it intended to serve. Such assessment might be based on test performance compared to previously assessed needs, pretest performance, selected norms, specified performance standards, or the

performance of a comparison group. It also looks broadly at the effects of the program, including intended and unintended effects and positive and negative outcomes. Product evaluation is identical with summative evaluation described by Scriven above.

A second example of decision facilitative model for evaluation is the CSE model developed by Marvin Alkin (1975) and named for its origin at the Center for the Study of Evaluation (CSE) of the University of California at Los Angeles. This model has five stages, each related to a particular kind of decision to be made. In the first stage, related to problem selection, procedures similar to needs assessment models are used for determining educational needs and identifying the goals for the program. The second stage is related to selecting programs that could be used to close the identified gaps. This stage involves the appraisal of available instructional materials that might be used in a program for attaining goals. This stage helps the curriculum decision maker in selecting curriculum materials that might be used in the program and in selecting learning opportunities. The third stage is related to modification of the program. The evaluator provides information on the degree to which the program as carried out corresponds with the plan. The fourth stage is similar to the third stage in that it looks at the relative success of different parts of the program

as it is progressing. Data collected during this stage helps to ameliorate the program. The final stage of the CSE model concerns adoption. This stage provides decision making information on the achievement of goals stated in the first stage. The purpose here is to help decision makers determine whether the program should be modified, eliminated, retained or disseminated more widely.

Artistic Evaluation Model

An artistic model for educational evaluation views the curriculum as a work of art, and the curriculum evaluator functions much like a literary critic or art critic. Robert Donmoyer (1981) contrasts artistic models to adversary models that cast the evaluators in the roles of prosecution and defence attorneys, goal-free models that transform the evaluators into a philosopher, and responsive models that call for the evaluator to become a journalist with occasional editorial privileges. Although John Mann is said to be the first to conceptualize curriculum evaluation in artistic metaphors, others have expanded his ideas. Well known among the scholars who have written on this type of evaluation is Elliot Eisner (1967, 1979, 1985).

One of Eisner's procedures is educational criticism in which a critic asks such questions as:

> What has happened during the school year in a given school? What were the key events? How did they come into being? How did students and teachers participate? What were the consequences? How could events be strengthened? What do such events enable children to learn? (1977:151)

There are many ways in which the richness of programs can be disclosed. These are films, video tape, photography, and taped student and teacher interviews. Eisner sees these useful tools for portraying aspects of school life, valuable channels for communication especially when supplemented by critical narrative. Although there is no recommended structure for conducting curriculum criticism, there are, according to Eisner (1985) three phases to the process. The first is the descriptive phase during which the critic describes qualities of life in a classroom. This description should convey the feeling of what life in the classroom is like.

The second phase is the interpretive phase. Here the critic interprets the events described in phase 1 by providing explanations for the actions, reactions, and interactions observed. The critic's personal knowledge, which includes both theoretical and practical knowledge is used to interpret the events in the classroom. Ideas from social sciences most frequently come into play. These ideas form the conceptual maps that enable the educational critic to account for the events that have occurred and to predict some of their consequences. This is a crucial

phase in this model. Both Eisner and Mann see the prime function of curriculum criticism as, the disclosure of meaning. The critic accomplishes this by what Mann calls "disclosure models" to the situation. The models are grounded in the personal knowledge of ethical reality. In other words, the disclosure of meaning does not emanate from data analysis but rather from "extensions, transformations, and deployments of intuitively held personal knowledge". Eisner (1985) relates the role of interpretation to the concept of "thick description" as used in anthropology. Thick descriptions seek deep structures of social events, the rule or modes that give them order.

Curriculum criticism culminates with the evaluative phase. Apart from describing and interpreting the events in the classroom further, the critic renders judgement. The criteria on which the judgments are made are based on the personal values of the critic. It is possible, therefore, that different critics would arrive at different conclusions when observing the same classroom. This subjectivity has been criticized by other scholars who are concerned with the validity of the evaluation results. Eisner and Mann find this subjectivity the strength of this approach. The acknowledgement of different points of view about the effectiveness of curriculum provides more alternatives to decision makers.

Eisner has, in addition, answered the concern over the validity of educational criticism by suggesting two particular processes that can be used to address this problem, namely: structural corroboration and referential adequacy. Structural corroboration is a process of collecting information and using it to establish links that eventually create a whole that is supported by bits of evidence that constitute it. It seeks to ascertain the extent to which criticism is coherent and persuasive. It tests the critical story against the following criteria: sense making and coherence. Referential adequacy on the other hand, is the process of checking the criticism against the phenomena it seeks to describe, interpret, and evaluate - classroom interactions. It is the empirical check of critical disclosure.

Another aspect of artistic evaluation is connoisseurship. The fundamental distinction between connoisseruship and criticism is that "connosseurship is the art of appreciation" whereas "criticism is the art of disclosure". Describing the general aspects of educational connoisseurship, Eisner writes:

> The ability to see, to perceive what is subtle, complex, and important, it is first necessary condition. The fact of knowledgeable perception is, in the arts, referred to as connoisseruship. To be a connoisseur is to know how to look, to see, and to appreciate (1985:219).

The educational connoisseur must be able to distinguish what is significant about what is observed in schools. The connoisseur also must be able to recognize how the individual aspect of classroom life form the overall structure within which the teacher and students work. Finally, to assist in understanding both what and how the students are learning, it is important for the connoisseur to deduce the "rules" at work in a classroom.

Many evaluation models have tended to rely heavily on quantification as a method of communicating the results of the education process to the public. More often than not, the public find it difficult to interpret statistical data and to go beyond it in order to understand and appreciate the learning process students go through. The connoisseur approach, in the writer's opinion provides a complementary alternative of communicating educational practice and its consequences to all concerned in public education.

The field of educational evaluation has a lot of evaluation models to offer. Curriculum planners should not confine themselves to a single model but should as Unruh and Unruh put it:

> ...choose models to suit various contexts for evaluation. Consideration should be given to the purpose of the evaluation, the audience to be served, the size and scope of the curriculum area to be evaluated, and the constraints of time, cost, and human resources. Standards for evaluation and guidelines for judging the adequacy of an evaluation plan must also be considered (1984:290).

CURRICULUM PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MALAWI

A Dissertation Presented

By

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Levels of Curriculum Evaluation

Apart from understanding and applying the various models discussed above, it is important to know the levels under which such models can be put to use. Evaluation is commonly thought of as taking place at three levels: the evaluation of student progress by teachers in classrooms; the evaluation of schools and school systems by outside agencies, and the evaluation of student achievement by state and national organizations or agencies.

Evaluation in the Classroom

The classroom is a site of important data gathering. We can broadly distinguish two types of activities that take place at the classroom level. The first and most commonly known activity is that of gathering data for measuring students' learning outcomes, and the second involves gathering of data that is useful in determining the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction. The latter is of course related to school-wide evaluation while the former is related to state or nation-wide student assessment.

Everyday, teachers informally evaluate their students on the basis of their own tests or their own subjective judgments. This type of evaluation has been referred to earlier in this paper as formative evaluation. There are various instruments which may be used in evaluating

classroom. According to Doll (1986) the instruments that are most often used fall within the following categories:

Achievement tests
Anecdotal records
Appreciation tests
Aptitude tests
Aptitude inventories
Checklists
Interview schedules
Observation schedules
Personality inventories
Projective techniques
Rating scales
Semi-projective techniques
Sociometric tests
Tests of mental ability (Intelligence)
Vocational interest inventories (Doll, 1986:219).

Many teachers are not very familiar with these instruments and if some do, they often rely on their informal techniques for evaluating students, curriculum and instruction. The teacher's self evaluation of his or her own work still offers one of the most promising ways of improving school programs especially when the teacher is given more autonomy in making curriculum and instructional decisions.

School and System-wide Evaluation

Entire schools and school systems may be involved in evaluation in the form of surveys, opinion polls, follow-up studies of graduates and early school leavers, and the use of standard evaluation instruments. Unlike the single class evaluation where results of the study are directly related to that classroom, the results of system-wide evaluation are supposed to be applicable to a wider

school population, and hence, a more rigorous scientific approach is applied.

National and State-wide Assessment: Tests and Examinations

Tests and examinations have traditionally served as a major means of setting and maintaining educational standards. The extent to which they effectively measure individual student learning outcomes and monitor the effectiveness of educational programs can only be determined by first analyzing the two types of assessment, namely: norm referenced and criterion referenced tests or examinations.

Perhaps the most telling ways of understanding norm referenced tests is by looking at educational testing in American schools. Although critical literature on testing has tended to focus public attention on the role of tests in selection and placement of students, there is abundant evidence that an overriding role of educational testing has been to serve purposes of public accountability, program evaluation, and institutional comparison (Resnick and Resnick, 1985). One way of proving this point is to look at the circumstances in which standardized tests were introduced in America. According to Resnick and Resnick:

> Standardized tests were introduced in the period 1880-1920 when booming enrollments, large school building programs, and the cult of efficiency in industry combined to encourage the schools to

> justify their performance in quantitative ways to local taxpayers... At that time, standardization meant that publishers would provide information on how trial populations elsewhere had performed, and how the results might be interpreted. It was common for school administrators who used the variety of available achievement tests to seek ways of comparing the performance of schools within their own school district (1985:11).

Anyone familiar with the status of testing in America would be quick to agree with the above quotation that the situation prevalent in the 1880's is also plaguing the school system in America a hundred years later.

The interwar period saw a resurgence of enthusiasm for the potential of tests in matching educational programs to individual talents and interests developed. The successes of World War 1 Army testing program provided this impetus (Camfield, 1969; Chapman, 1979; Samuelson, 1977). One of the major concerns in education in the 1930's was with high rates of youth unemployment. Thus, the school system became interested in vacational and educational guidance and tests were devised for this purpose and to extend back up services in the identification of the gifted and the handicapped. Despite these efforts, most formal testing in American schools still serves institutional monitoring functions better than functions of individual guidance or placement with the exception of advanced placement tests and some minimum competency tests imposed by states and school districts as high school graduation requirement. The Advanced Placement (AP) Tests of the College Board are

designed to promote college level study in the high schools and to provide a basis for granting college credit for such study. Advanced Placement programs specify a syllabus and an examination tailored to it.

However, although the advanced placement tests (ACT tests) can register declines in standards and thus bring about general public concern, they cannot shape an instructional response. This is because they are not deliberately tied to the high school curriculum and they cover a small subset of the academically talented. The only other external course examinations serving a large number of academically oriented in the United States are the New York State Regents Examinations. But unlike the AP courses they do not give college credit but do, however, entitle students to a regents diploma or a special certification on their regular school diploma (Tinkelman, 1965). The College Board Aptitude tests (SATs) are even further divorced from the high school curriculum.

Minimum competency tests, aimed at the academically weakest of the American students, also tend to function as examinations that control the content of teaching. Equity seems to be to be the driving force behind the establishment of these tests. By court decision (Dera, P. v Turlington, 1984), states and local districts are forbidden to use competency tests as a basis for diplomas unless the material tested has been taught in the schools

for a long enough period hat students have reasonable opportunity to master it. In other words the tests must be based on the universe of knowledge taught in the school. Like examinations, these tests influence content and motivate study (Resnick and Resnick, 1982). Some school districts, like the Pittsburgh Public Schools, have instituted very ambitious testing programs that go well beyond the mandated state programs and are explicitly designed to raise standard of academic performance. However, by focusing only minimal performance, the competency testing movement severely limited its potential for upgrading educational standards.

An analysis of the way the tests are constructed also reveal that they do not serve education well. Writers of norm referenced tests include in the tests only the items which discriminate between the best and the worst. In order to obtain items with high response variance, items that measure well taught concepts and skills of schooling are likely to be excluded. The assumption that everyone can learn equally well is rejected in norm referenced testing. Although norm referenced tests do identify persons of different ability, they are of questionable value in curriculum evaluation. They may not accurately measure what educational programs are designed to teach or reveal particular problems that are keeping students from

achieving. McNeil admits that teachers can sometimes improve scores on such tests, but is quick to state that:

> such improvement usually results from tricks like (1) telling [students] to respond to all items so that the possibility of getting more answers is increased...; (2) testing at a different time of the year than previously to show apparent but not real gains; (3) capitalizing on regression effects that make the poorest scores look better on the second testing; and (4) teaching pupils to respond to the items themselves and to test format (Macneil

Recently some educationalists and administrators have begun advocating the use of criterion-referenced tests in American schools. Criterion referenced tests are meant to ascertain a learners status with respect to a learning task, rather than a norm. Criterion referenced tests tell what learners can and cannot do in specified situations. The tasks selected can be those which the curriculum emphasizes. The items used in the test match the set of learner behavior called for in the objective and should not be eliminated, as in the norm referenced tests, merely because most students answer them correctly. Hence, these tests can be sensitive measures of what has been taught.

In countries like Malawi where examinations are criterion referenced, the examinations play a multiple role. First, they measure individual student outcomes the results which are used for selection or placement. Second, they assist those involved in curriculum development to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum system-wide.

The French school system, for example, uses virtually no standardized tests but makes extensive use of entrance and exit examinations to control who enters particular programs and who received diplomas, certificates and degrees. The examination are based on content of what has been studied in the preceding years of school (Moody, 1978). Second, they assist those involved in curriculum development to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum system wide. Criterion referenced tests are also useful in showing whether a student has mastered specific learnings. That is why they are popular in instructional settings using continuous progress plans or other individualized teaching approaches.

Since the performance of students is among one of the important indicators for program success, the writer is in favor of criterion referenced tests or examination for determining the performance of students in schools. Apart from accurately measuring students learning outcomes and gauging their progress, they also can provide data for making curriculum decisions and for planning educational, programs.

Teacher, Student and Parental Participation in Decision Making Process

Decentralizing decision making entails active participation of different groups: teachers, students, parents and the general public. The following discussion

looks at the case for each of each group in participating in decision making in education.

Teacher Participation in Curriculum Decision Making Process

Perhaps one of the classical study on the issue of teacher participation in curriculum decision making, was one conducted by Holloway in the state of Maryland in 1928. Specifically, Holloway wanted to find out the effect of teacher participation upon the professional knowledge and the skill of teacher, and how that participation affected the progress of the students. This data was going to help in deciding whether or not teachers should participate in curriculum decision making. He divided the teachers into control and experimental (those who were actively involved in the preparation of courses of study). While the results of this study showed that the teachers of the experimental group made as much progress in professional spirit, attitude, and teaching skills as did the teachers of the control group, slight gains were observed among teachers in the experimental group. The students in the experimental groups made on the whole slightly greater gains in the functions tested than did the children with whom they were compared. The teachers engaged in curriculum decision making did much more professional reading than they had done before in any one year, and more than the teachers of the control group. In addition, the communities served by

the schools in the experimental groups were brought into closer relation to the work of the schools through the growing power of initiative on the part of the teachers (Holloway, 1928).

Over the years, however, teacher participation in school decision making has been an issue of contention in many school systems, and research findings regarding the efficacy of teacher involvement has not been clear cut. Earlier on in this study, it was generally contended that when workers are involved in decision making they were committed in the implementation of the system's programs and operations. Mohrman, Cooke, and Mohrman (1978) examined involvement in decision making in relation to Parsons' (1951) technical (operational at the teacher level) and managerial (school wide in scope) domains and found out that teachers desired greater involvement in technical issues than in managerial issues and that the desire to participate is not evenly distributed throughout the organization.

In a similar inquiry, Duke, Showers and Imber (1980) investigated teacher involvement in and commitment to decision making and concluded that most teachers were less anxious to participate in school-wide or managerial decision making and derived little satisfaction when they did. These findings led more writers to explore further levels of decision participation. Bridges (1967), for

example, developed a model for shared decision making which stated that subordinates have zones of indifference within which an administrator's decision will be accepted without question. He argued that not all decisions are appropriate for shared decision making and that there are issues which teachers do not care to be involved in. He therefore postulated the need for administrators to apply a "test of relevance" (interest) and a "test of expertise" (knowledge) before seeking to involve teachers in decision making process.

Clear and Seager (1971) further exploring the zone of indifference concept, but preferring to use the positive label "zone of acceptance" found that when relating to either organizational maintenance or teachers' professional judgments, administrators always can expect to have a desire to exercise influence greater than teachers are willing to accept. Summarizing the research regarding zones of acceptance, Hoy and Miskel (1982) stated that if subordinates posses a personal stake (high relevance or interest) in the decision and knowledge to make a useful contribution (high expertise) then the decision clearly falls outside the zone acceptance, and subordinates should be involved in the decision making process. On the other hand, if the issue is not of interest and falls outside their sphere of competence, then the decision is within their zone of acceptance and involvement should be avoided.

This analysis inevitably produces two marginal situations (high interest-low expertise and low interest-high expertise) for which answers regarding decision involvement are less clear. The administrator, therefore, needs to give careful attention to these marginal situations, and decision involvement should be determined by the content of specific issues.

Other researchers have argued the case for teacher involvement in decision making with the argument that such participation increases job satisfaction and job performance (Myers, 1970). The works of Morse and Reimer, (1956); Vroom, (1959); Seashore and Bowers, (1963); and Powell and Schlater, (1971) reported a significant relationship between decision involvement and job satisfaction. However, other researchers like Brayfield and Crockett, (1955); Herzeberg, Mausner and Snyderman, (1959); Aram Morgan, and Esbeck, (1971) and, Green and Organ, (1973) concluded that this relationship is not simple and direct. Herzberg, et al (1959) developed in their research the "two factor theory of job satisfaction" which simply stated, indicates that it is possible for workers to be satisfied and dissatisfied simultaneously.

Recently, Schneider (1984) conducted research to more clearly understand the relationship between decision making involvement and job satisfaction by exploring the interaction between levels of involvement, teachers'

interest and expertise in decision issues and job satisfaction. In his findings, Schneider (1984) reported that there was no significant difference between respondents' levels of interest and job interest. He also found that there was no significant relationship between the independent variables of decision condition, interest, and expertise and the dependent variable of overall teacher job satisfaction. These findings supported Hoy and Miskel's (1982) supposition that the zone of acceptance is related to the decision-making process. The study also reported that a significant relationship existed between respondents' level of decision involvement and level of satisfaction. This finding, therefore, refuted an earlier assertion by Alutto and Belasco (1972) who found that denials of involvement in decision issues of importance was related to lower levels of satisfaction, and thus upholding their theory of decision involvement based on the discrepancy between actual and desired levels of involvement. Furthermore, contrary to the findings of Mohrman, Cooke, and Mohrman (1978) and Duke, Showers, and Imber (1980) cited above, Scheneider's study revealed that although discrepancy scores for both decision domains (managerial and technical) indicated a general level of deprivation, teachers perceived a greater discrepancy between their actual and desired levels of involvement regarding managerial (school wide) issues than technical

(instructional) issues. This would imply that teachers have achieved a higher congruence between their actual and desired involvement in issues which relate directly to their teaching situation and are now expressing a desire to increase their participation in school wide decisions.

In certain school systems instead of teachers fully participating in decision making, they are merely consulted. The consultation model according to Rairden (1973) has three major inadequacies:

(a) it has no binding force, it can be ignored by a head teacher who will consult his staff but act as precisely as he wishes

(b) it can be sham procedure avoiding a true discussion of the issues involved in any decision, and

(c) it allows no staff initiative because it is by definition conducted on the head's terms, when he chooses. Staff have no right to raise issues for discussion (1973:102).

Where teachers are involved merely in consultation and not fully in decision making, there is less pressure on the head to keep staff informed about matters relating to the issue under discussion. If staff are going to decide things, they will be much greater pressure on the head to ensure that they have the whole picture of the matter. Those who value confidentiality will, of course, see this argument against wider participation in decision making. Most organizations have abused the word "confidential". To

them it simply means any information which prevents others in the organization in grasping the magnitude of any problem or issue thus, making them subservient to him/her on any decision. This is so because for one to make informed decisions in any organization one has to be accessible to information.

Although the teacher can be denied school wide decision making powers, there is no convincing argument why he/she should be denied the freedom to decide in the classroom since at this level he/she alone knows what is best for his or her students. Teachers should be viewed as free men and women with a special dedication to the values of the intellect and enhancement of the critical thinking powers of the young. The conceptualization of teachers as inquirers who are capable of analyzing curriculum ideas and their potential use for the classroom situation have grown out of studies by Connely, (1972); Connely and Ben Peretz, (1980); Elbaz, (1981). Furthermore, viewing teachers as intellectuals provides according to Aronowitz (1985), a strong critique of those ideologies that legitimate social practices which separate conceptualization, planning and designing from the process of implementation and execution. Teachers ought to be given a platform for raising serious questions about what they teach, how they are to teach it, and what the larger goals are for which they are striving. This means that they must take a responsible role in

shaping the purposes and conditions of their work (Aronowitz, 1985).

Apart from looking at teachers from the context of the classroom, some studies recognize that the teachers' classrooms are part of the organizational structure extending upward in the case of Malawi, from classroom upward to the state. Teachers, therefore, must participate in curriculum decision making at this level as well. However, research has revealed that teachers' desire for participation in decision making depended on the kinds of decisions in which they would be involved. Ponder and Bullock (1976), following through on Alutto and Belasco's work, identified "friction points": high importance areas of decision making in which a large number discrepancy existed between actual and desired participation. These friction points applied to certain kinds of educational decisions but not to others. With respect to curriculum planning, the discrepancy between actual and desired participation was greatest for the determination of texts and instructional materials for the curriculum (42.2% of the teachers). Less discrepancy was exhibited for determination of the basic outline of the curriculum (29.4%) and determination of the detailed content of the curriculum (25.3%). One conclusion from this study is that teachers are primarily interested in decisions closely related to their classroom work. Young (1979) corroborated

this conclusion when she found that out of seven kinds of curriculum work she posed to teachers in 174 randomly selected schools in Canada, they preferred the translation of curriculum into instruction, which has direct implications for the classroom setting. Lortie (1975) also found out in his research that teachers were inclined to additional work time on activities related to their individual classroom rather than on broader curriculum work.

A similar study of shared decision making at the school level carried out by Duke, et al (1980) found that most teachers less inclined to participate in school decision making and derived little satisfaction when they did participate. Interested in this general ambivalence towards participation, Young (1985) wanted to further unravel the factors which motivated teachers in curriculum development, what satisfactions and dissatisfactions teachers derive from their participation in curriculum development. The primary motivation for participation, the study revealed, was the teachers' desire to be involved in decision making. This opportunity would enable them to contribute their knowledge of what works and what doesn't work in the classroom. A secondary motivation was that they were curious about the curriculum development process at the provincial level. On the satisfaction teachers derive from participation in curriculum development,

"interacting with other educators", "making a contribution", "meeting the intellectual challenge of curriculum decision making" and "keeping informed about the fields" were frequently responded to answers in that ranking order. Finally, on dissatisfaction, many teachers pointed out the slowness of committee work as a major reason for dissatisfaction. Other reasons where to do with hierarchical, financial and political constraints.

To understanding the above constraints it must be mentioned here that the Canadian educational system is centralized. Being a Federal Government, this centralization is at Provincial level, the locus of curriculum decision making is within a province. This mode of administration, where curricular are developed and subsequently revised at provincial level results in decision being made at the top of the hierarchy and filtered down to teachers who are expected to implement the decisions in their classrooms. As House (1974) pointed out:

> The basic predicament of teachers is that they are treated as passive consumers within their own organizational structure... they are acted upon rather than acting (1974:95).

Located at the bottom of the hierarchy teachers are required "to be flexible and adaptive (so they can respond to and conform to innovations and directives from

above"(South, 1975:5). On the contrary, according to studies such as those of Goodlad and Klein (1970) and Berman and McLaughlin (1977), teachers are far from passive curriculum users. Rather, they are quite active beings engaged in transforming the countenance of curriculum materials and instructional strategies that had the misfortune of landing on their desks. Under such organizational set up, a conflict is thus created between the professional status of the teacher and their hierarchical subordination. This then is the primary case of the dissatisfaction.

Like in many countries, curriculum development process is necessarily political and teachers as professionals see political pronouncements on curriculum as interfering in their professional work. The paucity of financial and other materials during the implementation phase of the curriculum development process, is another source for teachers dissatisfaction. The findings of the various studies reported above have an important implication to teacher involvement in curriculum planning and decision making in Malawi. First, the fact that teachers are mostly involved in those decisions that have a bearing on the classroom, upholds the views expressed earlier in the objectives of the study of the need to develop decision making strategies that blend both structures and environments. In this way, those decision areas where the

teachers feel less inclined to participate, but can be made competently at Ministry level, can remain to be decided at that level, but those decisions that have a specific bearing on teaching and learning at the classroom level should remain the prerogative of the teacher. In a situation like this, therefore, one would expect the curriculum guidelines disseminated by the Ministry to be flexible in order to allow the teacher to interpret the national educational goals and content, according to the needs of the learner and the reality of the learning environment in which the teacher finds him/herself.

Participation in decision making would still be at two levels, first the level of teacher representation on national curriculum committees and/or regional committees, based on expertise in a subject(s) and second, the school/curriculum level where all teachers make individual and group decisions. The latter level which involves making implementation decisions is pivotal to the success and improvement of educational programs. This study will return to this issue in subsequent chapters.

The world over, teachers have grown disenchanted about their profession. The reason why this is so, Aronowitz argues, is the growing disempowerment of teachers around the basic conditions of their work, but also a changing perception of their role as reflective practitioners. They argue that teacher's work is increasingly situated within a

them to the dictates of experts removed from the contexts of classroom or serves to widen the gap between those who control schools and those who actually deal with curricula and students on day to day basis.

In the light of the research findings, and the arguments above, this study supports the framework for involving teachers in instructional and as well as in school-wide and national curriculum decisions.

Student Participation in Curriculum Decision Making Process

Most people seem to claim that there should be limits on the extent of power and participation that is allowed to children by virtue of the fact that they are of immature age. This position lacks a developmental perspective to participation. Thomas Ungoed (1972) suggests that pupil democracy should be regarded as a necessary method of providing the constructive social learning which is both an essential means of achieving educational goals. In fact, one may add to say that since schools are charged with the responsibility of instilling in the students democratic principles, this should not just end up in a theoretical Civics or History lesson, but should be practiced by the school itself. One way of promoting civic responsibility in the students is to give them opportunity to participate in decision making in the school.

Writing on this theme, Gramsci (1971) sees the idea of a secondary school corresponding to an institution that not only instructs pupils in "dead" knowledge and prepares them for the world of work, but also develops in them "the element of independent responsibility". His concept of the two stages of schooling culminates in the "creative" school where learning takes place especially through a spontaneous and autonomous effort of the pupil, with the teacher exercising a function of a friendly guide. To discover a truth oneself without external suggestions or assistance, is to create - even the truth is an old one.

It is possible to distinguish different areas of decisions in which students at different ages could participate. To underscore the argument of developmental perspective of democratic participation, Alex de Tocqueville (1954) exuded:

> When I am told that the laws are weak and the population is wild that the passions are excited and virtue is paralyzed, that in this situation it would be madness to think of increasing the rights of people, I reply that it is for these that they should be increased (1954).

For school administrators who fear that it would be disastrous to increase the rights of students because this would lead to a breakdown of civility in the schools, have diagnosed the problem wrongly. According to Trump (1979):

> The whole panorama of Youth in "protest" in America and France in the sixties ought to make clear to educational leaders how hungry young people are of the opportunities to participate in serious decision making in the realm of social problems (1979:51).

When participation is seen from the viewpoint of learning, it has been argued by Freire (1970) that effective learning occurs within conversation (dialogue), and not as top-down instruction between teachers and students. In trying to apply his pedagogical theory from nonformal to formal settings, the theory still has the overriding goal of empowering not peasants but this time students who have traditionally been deprived of legitimate participation in deciding what to learn in school.

Writing on school curriculum improvement, Trump (1979) says that in order to have a curriculum that meets the requirements of basic education and those that are in the realm of creativity and special interest, curriculum planners and schools should, first, define or formulate content in all areas of human knowledge that every one in society needs to live adequately (basic education). Second, define what a given student needs to know in order to enjoy the hobbies that arise from special interest that the school has stimulated through required content. Third, to provide students who wish to discover options in careers. Trump argues that in order to plan the second and the third levels adequately, it is important for students to participate in the planning of the curricula because

more than any other group, they have the largest personal stakes in curriculum change.

Parental Participation in Curriculum Decision Making Process

Parental participation in school decision making is one of the factors that makes schools effective (Edmonds, 1984). In the industrialized countries for example, Japan is a leading example of success. One of the factors that this success has been brought about is education. Writing about education success in Japan, Levine and White (1980) noted that a high degree of parental involvement in and commitment to the education of children, and a society-wide consensus as to the appropriateness of this involvement, explain the reasons behind the Japanese educational success. Brookover and Lezotte (1979) and the Phi-Delta Kappan (1980) have pointed out that one of the characteristics of an effective school is parental participation. Edmonds (1984) has concurred with this assertion by saying that parents as clients of the school system must become influential as constituents in defining educational issues. This community-school collaboration can only be effective under decentralized decision making settings because the representatives of the community have influence or are influenced by the decisions made by the school.

Talking about characteristics of good schools, Edmonds (1984) has said that "good" school districts are those that:

> confer school skills that explicitly or implicitly a response to parental consensus on the school skills prerequisite to mastery at successive levels of schooling (1984:84).

Since one of the characteristics of decentralized decision making is the level of interaction and decision input the system has at the local level, we can tentatively conclude that this consensus building can effectively take place in decentralized rather than centralized decision making settings.

Parental involvement in the process of education is rooted deeply in American history. The organizational structure of the education system (where decision making is centered at the district level), has to a greater degree allowed for the members of the community to participate in decision making. Perhaps one of the factors to consider regarding participation in decision making has to do with how democratic this type of involvement is, and the kind of parental participation in the schools.

John Stuart Mill (1865) a proponent of participatory democracy argued that the most important point of excellence which any form of government can possess is its capacity to promote the virtue and intelligence of the people themselves. However, in order for the public to be

effectively involved in educational decision making, they must be well informed about the education process. This in fact becomes the catalyst for participation. Since not all members of the public are well informed and interested in education, some form of elitism in parental participation emerges. Elite theorists have argued that in order for decisions to be made intelligently, for basic policies to be established coherently, and for the administration of political institution to proceed efficiently, there is need for a specialized of people who they need only consult, rather than involve citizens in policy decision making. This elitist view has been challenged by many scholars such as Freire, Fantini, Schwab, Apple, Vallance and Giroux just to name a few. The researcher also endorses this challenge because among other factors, the democratic involvement of the citizenry in decision making is, in the first place, a human right and, secondly, it facilitates the implementation of ideas and practices in the schools. The successful implementation of well thought of programs in the schools brings about program improvement and excellence in the schools. In addition, the democratic participation of the various constituencies in the community or society, is an assurance for the promotion of equity in the schools.

On the issue of kinds of involvement, Fantini (1981) has developed a typology focusing on involvement in curriculum decision making. This four part-continuum sees

parents as clients, producers, consumers, and as governors. Schools view parents and other members of the community as clients and do not offer opportunities for full participation in school affairs. According to Fantini, such activities as a "teacher's day" or a specially scheduled "education week" complemented by talent shows or meet-the-staff nights and scheduled meetings by administrators to "inform" the community on the state of education in their schools and to interpret school programs to the community, are the kinds of parental involvement activities. This type of involvement aimed at fostering public relations is very common in many school systems, and is not sufficient. The second role of parents as producers hinges its activities on instructional support. Parents:

> are involved in the curriculum and in direct affairs of schools in a supportive capacity as school volunteers, para-professionals, hall monitors, tutors, clerical aides, library assistants, lunch room assistants, and student club assistants (this listing is illustrative only and is not meant to be exhaustive). In these areas parents are viewed as producers and their participation efforts seek to increase the base of talent within the school by tapping community resources (Fantini, 1981:16).

This type of support is what Salisbury (1980) calls the expressive supportive participation. In other instances, as in paraprofessional programs, parents are paid participants in school affairs. This form of involvement

is beneficial in that it leads to increased student achievement.

The next point on the parental participation continuum, is to see parents as consumers and as such their role consists of being active, intelligent, and informed consumers. Viewing parents as well as children as consumers has resulted in schools extending their afternoon programs for children into evening programs for adults. These adults may be academic, vocational, or avocational in nature. This role is very important especially in developing countries where parental illiteracy is high. The school is seen in this sense as an agent for social change. These kinds of activities do not only benefit parents but also offer students the opportunities for students play the role of active citizens as they involve themselves in community related issues.

The last role is that of parents as governors. Writing on this, Fantini says:

> This participatory system is rooted in the democratic <u>ethos</u> which, despite the contrary ethos of professionalism, continues to inform our public policy making in all areas including schooling. The warrant for and the political nature of this latter role of parents as governors can be seen in terms of three putative rights: the right to hold public officials accountable; the right to choose which institutions may assume the mantle of <u>in loco parentis</u>; and the right to organize and express the parent's interests (1981:18).

In this study, the governance role is treated as very important, one which can influence the way the other roles can be implemented in the schools. When parents are involved in policy decision making, it is the contention of the writer that further participatory roles at the implementation stage can easily be facilitated because the parents are at least involved in the initial planning of some activities of the school. This involvement motivates them and engenders a sense of ownership of the school and what it stands for.

Sinclair and Ghory (1981) offer a conceptual framework of learning which puts parental and teacher collaboration in the education of learners as central. Sinclair and Ghory see one of the ways of creating optimum learning environment by making the school and home environment complement each other. In order to remove the dysfunctionality of the home and school environments, they argue correctly that, it is important for parents and teachers to join hands to create conditions in both environments that have a positive impact, to maintain contrasts that contribute to academic competence and to create new blends that encourage learning.

The first direction in bringing about this is to conceive of the curriculum not as a course of study but as environments in which children learn and grow. Such a conception helps one to realize that the family, the

community and the school are all providing environments which can be transformed to become environments for productive learning. A second direction is to examine the assumptions, often unstated, which lead parents and teachers to counterproductive efforts, and to substitute for these negative assumptions with new ones which can be used to form closer associations between school and home. The third direction is to follow a proposed design for uniting parents and teachers that would encourage both groups to collaborate in designing complementary learning environments that will assist learners in their development.

It is not possible to involve everyone actively in decision making. Traditionally, one way of doing this has been through representation. In democratic government members of the legislature represent their constituencies. In organizations like the school, the committee system has been a popular way of representing the large constituency of those with vested interest in the running of the school. These include parents, the school community, teachers, students and school administrators. According to Bridges (1978), constitutions of committees commonly distinguish between members who attend with different kinds of entitlement:

(i) merely as observers with the right to listen but not to contribute to discussion,

(ii) as someone able to contribute to discussion and entitled to argue a case but not in the final resort able to vote, and

(iii) as someone with full entitlement to listen, argue, and exercise the power of decision in a vote.

With these distinctions at the back of our minds, we should pause before denying anyone, in blanket terms, the right to participate in decision making and ask whether we are really justified in denying them the right to participate at any level, for example, as mere observers.

Centralized and Decentralized Decision Making Systems

Centralized decision making as pointed out earlier in this study is, the concentration of decision making power by the central office and in the case of many educational systems, by the Ministries or Departments of Education with very little participation of those at the periphery. While the concept of centralization is generalizable from one system to another, that of decentralization is not. There are variations of decentralized decision making practices from system to system. This section will, in discussing decentralized systems, point out these differences. Since the main contention is this study is the effective blending

of centralized and decentralized decision making processes, a review of both systems will be made with a view of coming up with those ingredients that would make such a blending a productive one. The reader will be reminded of an analogy in building that in order to have a strong, solid structure, the right mix of water, cement, and sand/gravel is very important. Unfortunately, for decision making, there is yet no formula for getting the correct balance of variables from centralized and decentralized decision making settings. This study, is just another attempt at understanding how people and institutions make decisions and what conditions are optimum for effective and quality decisions.

In most countries, the rapid expansion of schools, combined with the increased importance of central control of funding and expenditure, has led to an increasingly centralized system of education management. Resources are controlled at the center, and lower level managers typically pass along all decisions to higher levels. Centralized control in education is not something necessarily to be avoided, and indeed a convincing case is often made for it, especially in newly independent countries where a strong sense of nationhood has not yet developed. A centralized system may be more efficient for some purposes than a very decentralized one to the extent that it results in less duplication of effort.

Within the African context, however, there are good reasons for believing that educational system could made more efficient if certain function and responsibilities were developed away from the central ministries of education and manpower development. The World Bank's (1988) argument for greater decentralization in Sub-Saharan Africa are as follows:

> Long distances between individual schools, and the center. Great ethnic and linguistic diversity; relatively poor development systems of communication; inferior transportation, and a central government budget that is inadequate to keep vehicles on the road (World Bank, 1989).

Under such conditions, the flow of resources and information between the central ministry and individual institutions is frequently interrupted or halted. An increased amount of local initiative might obviate the need for such flows or alleviate the consequences of their not occurring.

Decentralization is an ambiguous word; it has come to mean different things to different people. Some view decentralization simply as an administrative device - as a shift in administration from the national to the state or city government, or from central city administrative offices to the field. Others insist that decentralization plans embody a design for meaningful shifts in power from central agencies to local communities. Only such plans,

they maintain, can temper the local bureaucratic monopoly on policy. Administrative adjustments are necessary but not sufficient for this kind of decentralization, because these adjustments can be accompanied without involving local communities or transferring power to certain publics. Decentralization in the latter sense necessarily entails what some refer to as community control of a given functional area whether it be education or health, and so forth (Fantini and Gittell, 1973).

The terms centralization and decentralization often connote different meanings to different people. According to Tilak (1984) centralized decision making is one "where the whole process of planning takes place at the central/national level." Such a plan might well provide a regional (provincial, district level, block level or even village level), disaggregation of plan proposals, targets, resources, etc. Nevertheless, it is a centralized one. On the other hand, a decentralized decision making process has more variations. A decentralized decision making process can be defined as one where the decision making process occurs at various levels from the bottom up. Under such a system, the provincial government like India, or even regional/district authorities, receive only guidelines and general objectives from the central planning machinery, but the actual decision making process takes place at the provincial or district levels.

Theoretically, Tilak says that it is possible that the plans prepared by the provincial and regional or local governments are incorporated into the national plan, and it is released by the central planning agency, in which case, the national plan can be considered as a decentralized in character. Further, it should be noted that decentralization in planning is only a matter degree. In Federal Governments like the USA and India, for example, planning at state level represents one level of decentralization, and decision making at district level reflects another level of decentralization. Shared decision making at unit or school level represents yet another level.

This inevitably brings the issue of defining the criteria for judging the degree to which a system is decentralized. According to Naik (1969) the extent to which a system is decentralized. According to Naik (1969) the extent to which a system is decentralized or centralized depends:

> on a continuous interplay - the movement of ideas up and down - between several vertical units of decision making such as between center, region or province, district, block, etc. and the systems elasticity and dynamism (1969:23-24).

In other words, information flow in a decentralized system is a continuous two way process while that in a centralized system is a top-down; and the organization structure in

decentralized system is more elastic and dynamic than in a centralized system.

Another criterion that this study proposes is to first, to make a distinction between the two decision making systems. There are several ways one can do this. For example, analyzing the flow of information and ideas up and down, as Naik has pointed out, and second, studying the authority and decision making structure of the system and analyzing the decision making steps and the authority to act associated with each step. Once a system has been defined according to the criteria above as decentralized because it has, for example, open two way communication network with the center, shorter decision making steps and that power and authority to execute a decision and implement it, is also found at the bottom levels of the hierarchy, the next step is to find out the degree to which the system is decentralized. As pointed out earlier, this varies from system to system. To do this, the writer proposes the analysis of participation level and the type of decision people at the bottom or periphery or engaged in. This analysis can also be taken up the hierarchy. Here, one is interested in finding out what role administrators play under these decentralized decision making settings. What emphasis they put, for example, between control function and supervisory and coordination function.

In countries where reforms on decentralization have taken place for example, regional officials have argued that despite decentralization, the decision making authority they now had is limited to managing policy at national level. In other instances where decentralization has taken place, it has been observed that existing powers were transferred to lower hierarchical levels within the same organization set up, but decisions were still controlled at the top through rules and regulations. Hans Reiff (1987) has observed that political decentralization, i.e. the transfer of existing powers to another organization closer to the periphery (e.g. parents organization, community schools, etc.) is very rare. Another major problem in decentralization is that while power and authority to make some decisions is placed in the hands of administrators at regional or district levels, the power to make financial decisions, is still in the hands of the central office. A good example of this is the Spanish education reform. Hanson (1988) points out that 80% of the education budget was in fixed expenditure; there was, thus, little financial freedom of choice exercised by the provinces. Since certain decisions involve finances, the regional or local authorities could not successfully implement the locally decided programs.

Rondinelli (1981) and Conyers (1984) view decentralized on a continuum involving the transfer of

decision making authority. One end of the continuum is deconcentration. This involves the transfer of tasks and workload to subnational units, but no transfer of decision making authority. The next is delegation. Here, decision making is transferred from national to subnational levels. Delegation must be exercised within a policy framework established at the national level, and ultimate authority still remains at the national level. The other end of the continuum is the transfer of authority to an autonomous unit that can act with independence, a process known as devolution.

As observed, rigid centralization tends to block the flow of information and decisions; to alienate schools from their local environments, and to limit the ability to respond to local needs and resource opportunities. Decentralization can, by supporting school autonomy, contribute significantly to better school management and increase the responsiveness of the school to the local community, and the community to the school (World Bank, 1988).

The degree of centralization and decentralization has also been judged by the level of mechanization, formalization and standardization. Much of the literature generates the impression that mechanization, formalization and standardization, are conducive to centralization in the sense of transforming a man into a cog which is reminiscent

of Marx's description. In part, this follows from the fact that there is good evidence in support of the proposition that technology and organizational structure are related, and alienation is in turn affected by changes in technology and structures (Woodward, 1965; Blauner, 1964; Becker and Neuhauser, 1972). Empirically, it however turns out that the situation is quite different. Indeed, even for blue collar work, standardization and automation are not necessarily conducive to centralization. Thus as Landon notes, a variety of studies:

> support the notion that the introduction of more sophisticated technological devices in blue collar jobs result in more autonomous and smaller work groups greater required skills, and less personal supervision (Landon, 1974:25).

Perrow (1974b) summarizing the results of research by Blau, Hyderbran and Staffer, 1966; Blau, 1968; and by the Aston Group in Britain says:

> the more structured the activities of an organization (that is, the greater degree of bureaucracy) the greater the degree of decentralization of decision making or authority (Perrow, 1974b:39).

Two possible explanations have been advanced to explain why more bureaucratic formalization and standardization is associated with less centralization.

The first is the proposition that conditions that make operations more reliable also foster decentralization (Blau and Schoenherr, 1973).

More specifically, and taking the existence of an extensive body of personal regulations as an example, Blau and Schoenherr argue that:

> both strict conformity with personnel standards and the elaboration of these formalized standards encourage decentralization of responsibilities. Standardized personnel procedures are not as much a source of centralized authority as an alternative to it. The interpretation...assumes that standardization actually improves the reliability of operations, thus furnishing objective grounds for delegating responsibilities. The reduction of objective risks resulting from reliable operations...is the mechanism through which standardization promotes decentralization in organization (1971:120).

The findings of Blau and associates, agree with argument in this study for the need for standardized procedures in curriculum and examinations, the introduction of information storage and retrieval technology at system's control. This is imperative because when a system decentralizes its decision making procedure through delegation of authority, regionalization, and shared decision making at various levels of the system's hierarchy, there is need for standardized procedures to guide all participants in the decision making process while giving allowance for flexibility at the various local

decision making sites. Since examinations are important factor in curriculum policy evaluation, there is need for standardized examinations in Malawi because this is the only way in which policy makers can judge the effectiveness of the education system nation-wide.

However, while advocating the continuation of uniform evaluation procedures, more emphasis should be placed on continuous assessment because a curriculum that has been developed with due consideration of the diverse needs of the society has somehow got to be different from one locality to another. These differences also come about because of different decisions that teachers make about what objectives to emphasize and what content to use to achieve the objectives. Since the teachers' instructional decision making process, and the locus for curricular and instructional decision making shifts from those purely made on content and its structure to that based o the learners' needs, there is an increase in the choice made on content and method in order to suit the uniqueness of the school and the learners.

In order to allow for this healthy diversity while maintaining a uniform curriculum, there is need for the examination system to blend continuous assessment at school level and the national examinations taken in forms 2 and 4 of secondary education. This is just one example of blending centralized and decentralized procedures. This

blending is meritable because there are other skills, in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains that a 'paper and pen' test can not assess and which can only be assessed through continuous assessment involving a variety of evaluative tools over a longer period of time than that allowed under examination conditions.

In order to understand how centralized and decentralized decision making work, it is important to look at selected case studies. These country profiles of education decision making will highlight the pros and cons of the two systems and at the same time reveal some of the variables that are conducive to effective decision making. The criteria for choosing the countries was based on how whether the country fits with either typology. Examples drawn cover Europe, North America and Africa. The Scandinavian countries, for example, were chosen because, while they can be described as centralized, they have for the past decade or so been experimenting on decentralized decision making processes. Notwithstanding the different cultural contexts, this will enable the investigator to assess the problems of implementing decentralized models.

United States of America

> Curriculum practices in the United States vary so much so that it is difficult to classify them, let alone make generalized comments that are descriptive of all classes (Beauchamp and Beauchamp (1972), in Gress, 1978:178).

With the above reality in mind no attempt will be made to make national wide generalizations about curriculum decision making in the United States. To reflect the diverse the educational decision making settings, site-specific examples will be used not with the objectives of drawing wider generalization, but rather, as a way of illustrating the variations in curriculum decision making.

The United States has no national system of education per se. Each state has control and authority over educational matters. Although education in the United States is perceived as a function of the state, no state except Hawaii has developed a wholly state administered system. The other states have delegated to local school districts, authority and responsibility to establish and conduct schools. In other words, most decisions about what shall be taught in schools are largely made at the level of the school district in line with broad state guidelines. However, the school district can be influenced externally in its curriculum decision making. For example, ideas about curriculum content generated through federal projects, textbooks, federal and state laws, curriculum guides produced by state departments of education, and the work of individual scholars or scholarly groups, may be treated as influences on the curriculum at the school district level.

From an organizational point of view, decision making process in the United States can be generally described as decentralized. To understand the decision making process, it is important to describe the organizational structure of the system from state to school level.

At the state level, the Department of Education is headed by the Chief Executive Officer who in some States is known by the title: State Superintendent of Public Instruction. There is at this level a State Board of Education, and the State Superintendent presides as the executive officer for the board. The Department of Education has two principal types of function: (1) Regulatory: to ensure that the will of the state with regard to education matters is carried out, and (2) Leadership: to aid local and intermediate school units through the provision of professional and technical services. In trying to be more specific, Beauchamp and Beauchamp (1978) spell out the following functions of state departments:

> interpretation of state laws; guidance in district reorganization; insurance of compliance with state requirements pertaining to such matters as attendance, tax levies, board elections, and bonding limitations; provision for teacher certification and approval of teacher training programs; planning and program for state financial support of education and the distribution of state funds; administration of program of reports from school districts and provision of research services; and preparation of curriculum guides (in Gress, 1978:180).

They, however, add that not all state departments conduct all of these programs, but the "strong centralized" states do.

The decision making processes at district level is governed by an elected School Board and the board selects a Superintendent of Schools who is the executive of the board at district level, and is responsible for the administration of the schools within its jurisdiction and on behalf of the District Board of Education.

Every school has a school committee which has some input in the decision making process. The principal of a school makes routine school-wide affecting curriculum and instruction in consultation with his/her staff, and the school committee. For non-routine decisions with district-wide ramifications, they are made in consultation with the district Board of Education and the Superintendent. In most states, the school board at the local district level, makes the ultimate legal decision about what shall be taught in the schools within its jurisdiction. This procedure makes the curriculum for the schools in that district, school board policy. It makes no difference whether the curriculum is a document planned by persons in the local district or whether the board decides to purchase an assortment of textbooks in the various subject taught in

the schools from outside agencies (Beauchamp and Beauchamp, 1978). In a study conducted by Langenbach, Hinkemeyer, and Beauchamp (1971), it was found that 83% of the curriculum documents were produced at the school district level. The remaining 17% were almost equally divided among the individual school, the country and the state levels.

Contributions in curriculum made by Federal projects, professional associations and individual scholars mentioned earlier, have generally done two things: (a) They have created significant changes in content organization in various subjects, and (b) they have developed instructional materials consonant with the changed subject contents.

Since most curricula are planned at the local district level in the United States and the persons most commonly involved in curriculum planning are classroom teachers, the size of the school district influences the number of teachers from the total group employed in the district who become involved. Thus, involvement at the local district level varies from selected representations of teachers to develop a guides to be used in all of the schools. Regardless of degree of involvement, teachers, local school districts frequently employ specialists in the various subjects as consultants.

This in brief, is more or less the general picture of curriculum decision making in the United States. Decentralized decision making operates at two levels: the

level of the school district and that of the school. But as stated earlier, the status of decision making at district level is not uniform. For example some urban school districts such as New York, Worcester, Boston are centralized[18]

Arguing for such centralization, Edmonds (1979) says that school districts like New York, have a high rate of mobility, most of it within the district. With a uniform curriculum, when students move from one to another, they encounter a similar program of instruction. Another reason for standard curriculum is to make sure that the requirements in poor neighborhoods are identical to those in middle class neighborhoods. However, the argument of standards becomes flawed if by standards, it is also implied, as is the case in most instances, uniform ways of treating learners from different economic and racial groups or when one standard which is more characteristic of one economic group is applied to another without due considerations of the entry behaviors of the students.

Critics of a uniform curriculum, however, argue that a uniform curriculum may decrease the teachers' discretion over what they teach. Edmonds, nonetheless feels that although a uniform curriculum may decrease the teacher's latitude of choice of what they will teach, it does not

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18. The Boston school district is now working on a decentralization plan, modeled after decentralization plans

decrease the freedom on how to teach it. Of course, the less creative and able teachers are likely to follow the teachers' guide to the letter. The kind of centralization Edmonds is talking about seems to be an infusion of some decentralization where flexibility is the key word. Decentralized decision making is flexible in that it allows teachers to have the widest possible choice in deciding textual materials, classroom organizational styles and instructional strategies.

Although many people are aware of the advantages of decentralized decision making, they are not sure how they can go about implementing it in the schools. Some principals fear that they will lose authority to the teachers, and others feel they may not achieve much because of the loss of control and direction that they envisage the school will take. So, while it is true to say that school decision making in the United States is decentralized, the degree to which this is so, varies from district to district and from school to school. In some schools teachers complain that they do not participate fully in making school wide decisions and that they have limited freedom to make instructional decisions that can make a

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in Rochester, New York, Dade County in Florida, Pittisburgh, Pennsylvania, and Hammond, Indiana. The rationale behind this move is based on the philosophy that educators at schools as well as parents know best how to meet the needs of their students.

difference in student learning. Writing in the New York Times, Edward Fiske says:

> Schools are set up so that principals make almost all decisions, with teachers having little to say about even which materials they use every day. Many a curriculum have been successfully promoted by publishers with the promise that it is "teacher proof" (New York Times' Educational Supplement, 1989).

Parents also complain about their powerlessness in influencing decisions at the school. At the school district level, one hears of some disgruntled Principals of schools who feel that their freedom to make decisions in their schools is constrained by the overriding decision making powers of the superintendent of schools.

Some educators have argued that this state of affairs has come about primarily because of the way the State Department of Education operate. State Departments of Education are very bureaucratic and the relationship between the schools and the department is not conducive to autonomous decision making. As stated earlier, state departments are supposed to play a number of roles: regulatory, supervisory and guidance. Of these roles, some departments put more emphasis on the regulatory role. This role is antithetical to genuine local decision making in the schools. Schools are regulated so much so that there is very little room for local school initiative. The relationship between state departments and schools is not conducive to collaborative decision making. As one

Principal put it: "If I was walking along a road, I would prefer meeting a snake than a State Department of Education official."

Supervision and guidance are the kinds of roles that one would expect a decentralized institution to put more emphasis on. Under a decentralized decision making model, state departments are supposed to support, guide and coordinate the programs and activities of schools state wide. While the role of control is important for accountability purposes, it should not be over emphasized. In fact, in terms of quality control, the school districts, which are closer to the schools can do a better job of this.

Critics of the State Departments have also been quick to point out the ineffectiveness of the departments may primarily be due to the fact that they do not have power to shape policy. The power of enacting policy lies in the hands of State Legislators. This state of affairs leaves the departments with role of implementing policy. But since much of policy implementation is done at the school district level, the only feasible role for the department personnel is to uphold the bureaucratic function of regulating the activities of the schools.

Britain

Before the 1988 legislation mandating a nationally developed curriculum to be used in school, curriculum planning and decision making process in the United Kingdom was decentralized. According to the Administrative Memorandum Number 25 (1945) issued by the Ministry of Education:

> The Local Education Authority (LEA) shall determine the general educational character of the school and place in the local educational system. Subject there to, the governors shall have the general direction of the conduct and curriculum of the school (in Glatter, 1977:17).

Prior to this change, the general direction of the curriculum was placed firmly in the hands of laymen. All proposals and reports affecting the conduct and curriculum of the school were submitted to the governors of school councils. But according to Glatter (1977), the governors concerned themselves more with matters of discipline than with curriculum. It was also normally assumed that the head teacher controlled everything which happen in the school and was accountable to the governors for his stewardship. The Local Educational Authority (LEA) had the legal right to be consulted on matters pertaining to the curriculum. In practice, the LEA's were by tradition extremely reluctant to confront the governors or heads on

curricular matters, preferring to pursue their policies by applying indirect pressure.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) are not in the ordinary sense civil servants; they take some pride in being appointed by Queen-in-Council, and they are allowed by tradition a collective independence which would make them more influential than they are, were it not balanced by a tradition of caution in expressing individual views of remotely controversial kind. Most schools find their visits fairly infrequent because of their many other commitments, and because they are few in number. It would nevertheless be a mistake to underestimate their influence.

The School's Council is an independent body with a majority of teacher members. Its purpose was to undertake research and development work in curricula, teaching methods and examinations in schools. In all its work the council had regard to the general principle expressed in its constitution, that each school should have the fullest possible measure of responsibility for its own curriculum and teaching methods based on the needs of its own pupils and evolved by its own staff. Since the introduction of the national curriculum, the LEA's responsibility for determing the curriculum has been gradually eroded in that local curriculum policy has to take into consideration, the statutory requirement of the national curriculum.

The reasons for the government to introduce legislation to provide for a national curriculum in England and Wales, was for the system to develop the potential of all pupils and equip them for responsibilities of citizenship and for the challenges of employment in the future. While many Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools had made important advances towards achieving a good curriculum, progress was variable, uncertain and often slow. There was need therefore to raise standards consistently throughout England and Wales.

The purpose for introducing a national curriculum are:
i) To ensure that all pupils study a broad and balanced range of subjects throughout their compulsory schooling.
ii) To help schools to chalenge each child to develop his or her potential, by setting claer objectives for what children over the full range range of ability should be able to achieve.
iii) ensuring that all pupils, regardless of sex, ethnic origin and geographical location, have access to broadly the same good and relevant curriculum and programs of study which include the key content, skills and processes which they need to learn and which ensure that content and teaching of the various elements of the national curriculum bring out their relevance to and links with pupils' own experience and their practical application continue value to adult working life.

iv) Checking in progress towards these objectives and performance achieved at various stages, so that pupils can be stretched further when they are doing well and give more when they are not (Department of Education and Science, Welsh Office, 1987).

In addition to the raising of standards of education, the curriculum will have common content to enable children to move from one area of the country to another with minimum disruption to their education. It will also help children's progression with and between primary and secondary education (and on to furthe education). It will also enable schools to be more accountable for the education they offer to their pupils, individually and collectively.

While advocating a national curriculum, the government believes it is important that schools should also have flexibility about how to organise their teaching. The objectives for what pupils pupils will be able to know and do and understand, will be framed in subject terms, and schools will be able to organise teaching in a variety of ways.

This flexibility, together with the time available outside the foundation curriculum, will enabled schools, while meeting the requirements of the curriculum. This arrangement, is of particular interest to the researcher because he believes that a nationally developed curriculum

like one in Malawi, ought to give the schools, this kind of flexibility.

The national curriculum has just been implemented in England and Wales and as such, it is too early to talk about the improvements it has brought in the schools. Suffice to say, the mere description of this radical move from decentralized centralized curriculum decision making, is deserves a place in this review.

The Federal Republic of Germany

Unlike the United Kingdom, there is no autonomy in curriculum development in West Germany. State institutions, curriculum commissions, teachers' centers are all accountable directly to the ministry. The lack of autonomy of the school and the duty of the state to provide a satisfactory school system implies that it must have effective supervisory system. Supervision of the schools is administered at regional level and is carried out by Schulrat (School Advisor) and higher ministry officials.

The role of the Schulrat is an inspector and controller in the system. His contact with the schools and teachers include the rituals of observing and evaluating probationary teachers, observing and reporting on teachers who have applied for senior posts, and resolving serious emergencies in the school. The role of the Schulrat as a dissemination of information, teaching methods, curriculum

implementation and school development is very limited. The Schulrat is often overburdened with routine duties and does not have enough time to advise and counsel teachers. The number of teachers for whom he/she has responsibility may range between 200 and 500. However, the trend in curriculum innovation in West Germany has been towards the 'democratization' of education. Participation of audiences in policy making is seen as an important means of increasing legitimacy of decisions. Teachers' unions and Parents' associations have the right to comment on curriculum proposals. However, some parents have used their associations as political pressure groups to modify curriculum policy implementation. It is increasingly recognized in Germany that the impact of innovation depends on early involvement of those affected by it.

Heads of schools and teachers have been administered from the State Ministry of Education through intermediate regional authorities. The head and teachers have been regarded at the bottom of the civil hierarchy, have been expected to receive their instructions dutifully from above and to make reports back to the ministry. Recommendations have however, been made for increased autonomy for the school and more participation by the teachers, pupils and parents. The problem is that under the traditional system, the teachers have not had enough preparation to be more inquiring and they have not been expected to participate in

decision making. The resultant effect is that many teachers do not want to participate in decision making.

This should not be taken as a reason for administrators to deny teachers the power to make certain decision. Rather, it should make administrators aware that the conditions created by the system over time does not encourage teachers to participate. So, one way of promoting teacher participation is to institute organizational changes within the system.

Another way of facilitating participation in centrally planned curriculum is the example done in the State of Mainz. Here, teachers are sent proposed curriculum outlines and after analyzing the documents they send back recommendations for modification. The teacher can make proposals or counter proposals for change or recommendations for improvement to the attendant commission. In this way, the teacher can feel more involved in the development and implementation process than in the past when rigid teaching plans were issued and communication was generally one way. This procedure is welcomed by the school administration as an opportunity for increased participation. When it comes to the adoption of an innovation, the problem is how to encourage teachers to attempt new techniques and methods when they have a self assurance of their present competencies.

Another problem faced by the Mainzer studiem Stufe (MSS) is that of coordination. The problems of coordination are sometimes unanticipated in purely academic planning of MSS programs. So, MSS heads have their own initiative in communicating with other schools, but these ancillary administrative duties are often overlooked or ignored. It seems that persons in the bureaucracy or in the compartmentalized commissions appreciate the need for increased communication. Irrespective of his/her place in the hierarchy, the needs for everyone to learn about the procedure of curriculum development is being recognized. It is still questionable whether this two-way communication is sufficient, but at least it is an improvement.

In Mainz, however, the heads of schools have limited control over teachers. The teacher, as a fully qualified teacher, and a civil servant has a permanent position and is in exceptional cases disqualified. The learning objective orientation in the MSS helped to make instructional objectives much more precise than was the case until recently. It provides the possibility of unifying standards between schools and states, yet still, it does not restrict the freedom of teachers. A teacher is limited to the choice of learning objectives, and that is to benefit of the students who are informed what the teacher is trying to teach. It gives a teacher the more freedom in the choice of materials, sometimes in consultation with his pupils.

One of the purpose of MSS is to involve the pupils in decision making about content. A teacher can guide the student in choosing alternatives, but it is the learning objective which is stated, and not the content. The choice of content is wider. In view of knowledge explosion, it is more difficult to define what should be learned. For example, in the sciences, limits are needed in the amount of content to be selected. Alternative courses within a particular subject are devised. This freedom stems partly from the independence of schools from centralized university examinations.

Departmental meetings can play a vital role in the deliberation of curricular issues at school level. However, in the Federal Republic of Germany just like is the case in other school systems, departmental meetings may be regarded as an occasional tiresome duty when routine administrative matters such as the scheduling of examination timetables, the allocation of classes and ordering of new books and discipline are discussed. Following the shift towards curriculum guidelines, there is a need to discuss questions of content, choice of materials, methods of teaching and standards.

The concept of curriculum development at school level is limited, in general to experimental schools. Normally, that is the private business of the individual teacher and hardly a group matter. The tradition of 'King in the

classroom' and the 'hidden classroom behind closed door' are still strong. Those teachers who are charged with co-ordination tasks or who are working on a specific curriculum project, until recently were awarded by a reduction of teaching periods a week. But these rewards are hardly conducive to making a larger proportion of the teaching staff more committed to devoting time and energy to wider issues. Another aspect related to teacher commitment and curriculum development is the use of further training for trained teachers as a means of disseminating and evaluating curricula. A small proportion of teachers attend courses, but the practice of updating is not so well developed as is expected in other professions.

The centralized power of decision making at the ministry level in all states can result in strong political influence of the ruling party. This characteristic is sometimes clearly reflected in the philosophy of types of curricula developed. The whole educational system in West Germany, is organized vertically, the teachers being at the bottom of the administrative hierarchy. Only recently, the new comprehensive schools and other experimental institutions have become significant units in terms of school-based curriculum development. There are a few rewards for involvement, creativity, superior performance and professional improvement through participation in courses. The supervisory system is a controlling,

inspectorial operation, leaving the supporting dimension underdeveloped. The modification of attitudes, the adaptation of present structures and creation of new roles may help to facilitate curriculum development.

From the point of view of comprehensive schools, the absence of central direction from the ministry presents great difficulties in establishing criteria for the school leaving certificate at 16. The comprehensive school-based curriculum model is characterized by the following attributes: Development of teaching units containing goals and methods, tests and materials for students in individual schools by individual teachers (who get a reduction of teaching load and work as a team with other teachers); cooperation between schools, in the exchange of teaching units and planning the distribution of work between them through a committee of subject area teachers; advice from academics through teachers; and elaboration of curriculum guidelines by a commission of elected representatives of the Land Subject-area Committee and Academics.

In retrospect, the participation of teachers in curriculum development can be seen as a strategy by the Ministry of Education to unburden itself of responsibility and to reduce conflicts. The participation has the following objectives: consensus, without which innovation could not be successful; unburdening the ministry which, in any case is hardly equipped to carry out curriculum

development; legitimation in the eyes of public opinion, and enlarging the area of competence by involving academics and teachers in the commission.

Constraints in the experimental school-based curriculum development in Germany's schools have been noted. Teaching units can quickly become the subject of emotional discussion because the teaching materials do not describe their content in detail. Misunderstandings and criticisms from a one-side point of view can arise. A lesson with somewhat critical content but not written down as a unit or duplicated for use by a fellow teacher, may pass with only light discussion. Although teachers involved in development have a reduction of teaching load, they are still overburdened by the task. Intensive preoccupation with the production units is often a hindrance to preparation for actual classroom situation. The teacher is naturally interested in preparing his/her own lessons than in the problems of evaluation an of implementation elsewhere. Without a central institution for working out guidelines and without regional centers like the Geography Teachers' Centers, school based-curriculum development has insufficient supporting base.

When planning for such innovation like the school based program improvement, more attention should be paid to the necessary balance between tradition and change. To quote Dalin (1973):

> Innovations are not 'good' for everybody. Usually, one finds that the benefits vary from individual to individual. Only when a system understands the real effect of its own practice, and in particular effects of planned innovation, will the system be able to establish the balance between stability and change that will serve the individuals involved (1973:67).

Scandinavian Countries

Students of formal organizations often argue that a high degree of bureaucratization is minimal to innovation and creativity while non-bureaucratic forms of organization are more suitable for tasks which cannot easily be routinized (Merton 1957; Blau and Scott 1963; Burns and Stalker, 1966; Perrow, 1970). It is said that in order to cope efficiently with unstructured tasks and to adapt to changing external demands, hierarchy and central control should be de-emphasized, and individual and local units should be given relative great autonomy in defining their role.

Isaac Kendel (1933, 1955) claimed that highly centralized national systems of education tend to be instruments of authoritarian uniformity rather than creative change. Conversely, a decentralized system, allowing free play to the interactions between people and their environment, would encourage innovation and reform in education. Lauglo (1973) observes rightly that if these generalizations were valid, education should be stagnant in

the Scandinavian countries compared to Britain, for example. On the contrary, Scandinavian education has undergone a series of radical structural reforms. The Scandinavian experience suggests that bureaucracy sometimes can be a powerful lever for change in school structure; though it may at the same time inhibit change in role relations and pedagogic styles within schools. In other words, once change is accepted and supported by such centrally structured institutions, change process becomes radical.

Central control of the curriculum is one aspect of bureaucracy in national systems of education; and Denmark, Norway and Sweden differ in the extent to which control is centralized. In all three countries, however, legislation governs the broad outline of school structure, the duration of compulsory schooling (7-16), and key subjects to be taught in the schools. In Sweden, each type of school has a curriculum issued by the central school administration specifying the time to be devoted to different subjects, and giving recommendations of topics to be covered in each subject.

In Norway, there is also a centrally issued curriculum for each type of school, but there is more local discretion. As in Sweden, grades 1-6 have a common curriculum but municipal school committees can in Norway decide on the content of 60 to 90 minutes per week. In

Denmark, there is no centrally issued binding 'curriculum' in the sense as in the two countries, though centrally devised illustrative models exist. Each municipal school committee, and each school to some extent, prepares its own curriculum plan, subject to approval first by the municipal and then by the county council. One might argue that materials for teaching are more important as frames for teaching-learning process than are topics found in national curricula. Impressions from Swedish and Norwegian schools suggest that subject syllabi in the national curriculum rarely are topics for staff-room discussion. But the indirect influence of such syllabus guidelines can still be great when, as in Sweden and Norway, only centrally approved textbooks may be used in schools. Moves are now underway to relax central control over textbooks, but still, a strong influence will remain. The decision about which books to purchase in Denmark, for example, are made at the school level.

The system for assessing performance of pupils is another key influence on the teaching learning process. In all three countries efforts have in years been made to postpone formal assessment and to reduce its scope along with decentralizing the administration of examination. Only in Sweden has there been replaced by another centrally administered system. Standardized achievement tests which are used to assess the performance of groups of pupils in

key subjects (they are not directly used for individual assessment) in order to calibrate the marking scale for internal assessment. If a teacher deviates appreciably from the distribution of marks prescribed from the nation as a whole, then test scores must be used to show cause, for example, that the students as a group are exceptional.

In general, evidence from the three Scandinavian countries supports the hypothesis that in national systems of education, aspects of bureaucratic organization reinforce each other and tend to form a constellation of traits which is unfolded to varying degrees in different countries. The existence (or specificity) of a national curriculum document is but one aspect of this constellation. In more general terms, it is a question of centralization of decision making, the specificity of rules and regulations which steer local decisions, the extent of division of labor, and the influence of (or rather, lack of such) client groups (parents and students). The overall formalization of education functions (for example, school versus apprenticeship and informal on-the-job-training) may be another aspect of bureaucracy in education.

In Sweden and Norway, the head teacher's authority was weak under stable bureaucratic conditions which prevailed prior to school reforms. External control over the curriculum and appointments simplified the administrative task and enabled head teachers to teach part time and to

act in the role of primas inter pares. The scope of conflict with staff was reduced by the head teacher's limited discretion and by the possibility of projecting the source of tension onto higher authorities. Structural changes imposed from above undoubtedly affects the conditions mentioned above. By making obvious a teacher's dependence on centrally imposed frames of structural change, reduces the teacher's sense of autonomy. Already, at the beginning of Swedish school reforms, a study by Husen (1955) showed a widespread disaffection among teachers with the central school administration. In general the further away, the less teachers were satisfied with the support they received from a given authority.

In the relatively centralized Scandinavian system, the well pejorative term 'office-desk pedagogue' expresses a common frustration among the grassroots with decision makers and experts far moved from the 'coal face'. In a Norwegian study of academic secondary teachers, it was found that nearly seventy-five per cent of a nation wide sample of teachers endorsed the statement that "most people in central agencies working to change the structure of the school system appear to have little understanding of the practical problems facing the classroom teachers" (Lauglo, 1973).

In any educational system politicians and central administrators have great influence over educational

decisions, but they have the tendency to focus on 'macro level issues' related to school structure and ignore the concrete teaching learning process. Teachers on the other hand, reverse the emphasis to stress content and methods (Dalin 1973; Markund 1971). But unlike changes in school structure, change in the teaching-learning process itself cannot so easily be imposed from outside. As Bidwell (1965) and others have emphasized, the fundamentally 'non-bureaucratic' nature of teaching itself sets limits on the degree to which individual schools can be organized on bureaucratic lines. Successful teaching - especially transmission of norms and values - probably presupposes elements of particularism, diffuseness and affectivity in teacher-student relationship: normative orientations which are characteristically non-bureaucratic.

Furthermore, teaching is more of an 'art' than a 'technology'; it resists being broken down into programmable sequences and cannot easily be pre-structured according to rules and regulations. In addition, the work of teachers is typically well sheltered from direct scrutiny by colleagues and superiors. This facilitates a high degree of individual autonomy which is also supported by professional norms. The means most suitable for macro level change in education are, therefore, relatively inefficient for micro-level change. In this regard, therefore, the only way for bringing meaningful changes in

the school system is by involving teachers in the decision making process.

In all the three countries, there has been some decentralization of functions, for example, by devolving responsibility from the central school administration to the county level (the intermediate administrative tier). Though this need not involve much relaxation of central control - as in Sweden - the county boards are directly answerable to the central rather than to local government. There is also a trend to give schools greater budgeting flexibility and greater freedom to decide the grouping and sequencing of time tabled knowledge. In addition to trends affecting the entire national education system, they are 'experimental' schools in each country; these have carried some aspects of de-bureaucratization further, especially in respect of participatory democracy involving pupils as co-equals with teachers in some school council. The role of such schools is to influence the direction of thinking among those who plan the future organization of 'normal' schools.

Some scholars have questioned the degree to which decentralization has occurred in the schools since the reforms. Lindblad (1984), for example looked at some features of decentralized innovation work in Sweden. The assumption that he makes in this study about decentralization is that the school system - even at the

local level - is a formal as well as an informal hierarchy, and as such, this hierarchy influences decentralized innovative work. This means that those in higher formal and informal positions in the school will exert greater influence on such work. The study found this to be the case. That is, a form of decentralized innovative work adjusted to the hierarchy of the school. The work is initiated from above and it is performed to a greater extent by individuals holding higher positions in the local school system's hierarchy. From this point of view, Lindblad argues that the fact that decentralized innovative work is under the control of the school establishment, it can be regarded as an expression of the reproduction of power and legitimacy within the school system subsumed under reproductive functions of the school in society. Innovative work of this kind "has less to do with the struggle for change than with the maintenance of the status quo and the promise of improvement within current frames" (Lindblad, 1984:171-72). He further states that innovative work of this kind implies loyalty to the establishment. Such loyalty is most easily found among those in higher positions in the school system. The work performed is an act of loyalty or a fulfillment of obligations. However, Lindblad cautions the reader that it does not follow from this that all decentralized innovative work is of this kind. Thus, in politicized context, where the implications

of different alternatives stand out more clearly, the struggle for change versus the preservation of the status quo will become more clearly visible.

Africa

Education decision making in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa is centralized. In their efforts to achieve relevance in educational content, many African countries have adopted a variety of broad strategies. These include the formulation of comprehensive educational policies, the preparation of periodic development plans, the mounting of special innovative projects, and the creation of Curriculum Development Centers. In an effort to integrate some of the reforms in curriculum and instruction continent-wide, organizations such as the African Curriculum Organization have been formed. These reforms, however, have for the most part been planned and implemented centrally. Nevertheless, efforts are being made in some of these countries to introduce some forms of decentralization and shared educational decision making.

In this section, the study will review curriculum planning and decision making in Benin and Tanzania where decentralized decision making has been experimented on. Case studies of decentralized decision making in sub-Saharan Africa are in the form special innovation projects and hence in their experimental stages. Since this study is arguing for decentralized decision making, an evaluative

is arguing for decentralized decision making, an evaluative analysis of these educational projects will contribute to the understanding of shared decision making.

Benin

By Ordinance No. 7530 of 23 June 1975, the Government of the Republic of Benin promulgated a very fundamental reform of education. The nature of the reform is unique in the philosophy on which it was based:

> There is no schooling problem to be solved in isolation, the problem is one of development of which schooling problem is an important element (Educational Reforms and Innovations in Education, 1978).

This philosophy places emphasis on the link between the school and the local environment; and one of the prerequisite for this is that the locus of decision making in relating the environment with school activities should be the individual school.

The overall aim of the reform is the promotion of the social and economic development of the Republic with the specific objective of preparing the child for life and of integrating the child within the society as a productive and disciplined member. In order to achieve these objectives, the reform emphasizes, among other things, instruction in national languages and the placing of

teaching of science and modern technology at the service of public interest.

The key methodology of the reform is the establishment of school cooperatives in every school as 'production units'. The introduction of productive labor in the school has three aims:

- o an economic aim, which is to obtain additional finance for the school;
- o a social and educational aim of forging links between the school and the environment while, at the same time, training pupils in production and management techniques;
- o an instructional aim of making the environment the source, object and end of knowledge (Yoloye, 1986).

Implementation of the reform is the inter-ministerial cooperation between the Ministries of National Education, Rural Development and Public Health. One principle worth noting about this reform is that of democratic centralism, which in practice means the involvement of agencies from the grassroot level in a hierarchical manner while maintaining firm control at the center. The reform has made use of existing traditional hierarchy in the villages - chiefs, councils, family heads, etc. in order to facilitate communication and acceptance of innovations.

Tanzania has capitalized on the traditional hierarchy in order to reach the masses and Malawi's self help

strategy in primary education development, involves traditional and local party officials in the planning and implementation of education projects at school level.

To show how this principle of democratic centralism works, an example in the process of curriculum development will suffice: Teachers in the villages, town and communes within each district make proposals on the content of education. These proposals are digested and coordinated at the district level. The digests from the districts are further coordinated at the provincial levels. Finally the digests from the provinces are analyzed and collated at the Institut National pour la formation et la Recherche en Education (INFRE), which in effect runs and co-ordinates the day-to-day running of the reform. At INFRE the information obtained through this bottom-up process is then used to prepare instructional materials and organize the training of teachers to implement the new curricula.

In compliance with the ordinance, environmental studies are organized by teachers. Some cooperatives carry out a form of market survey in order to decide what to produce. Sometimes, economic surveys are conducted in the villages by trained teachers and students to discover the people's problems and to attempt to workout solutions to them. The findings of the surveys are often then used to demonstrate lessons in various school subjects such as arithmetic, social sciences and the natural sciences.

The focus on the school and its immediate environment has enabled Benin to promote cultural revival. This is an important aspect of education since cultural traditions of African countries had been suppressed in colonial days because they were branded as pagan. A necessary consequence of introducing cultural arts and skills into the schools has been the increasing use of local craftsmen and artists in school instruction; it is in these people that real expertise can be said to reside. Where this procedure has been used, the craftsmen and artists involved have acquired a new sense of pride in the realization that they have something unique to contribute to formal schooling.

There are, of course several problems in the actual implementation of this educational innovation and full assessment of its success or otherwise must wait several years. What is important to note at this stage, however, is the realization of the importance to involve people at grassroot level in the planning and implementation of the content of education.

Tanzania

Tanzania has been guided by the philosophy of education based on the socio-political philosophy of Ujamaa (African socialism) advocated by the countries first president Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. Ujamaa advocates human

equality, mutual respect, sharing of work and a fair distribution of wealth. In pursuance of this philosophy Tanzania has directed education not merely at the formal school population, but at the entire Tanzanian population. In doing this, it has had to rely heavily on its traditional cultural heritage and organization. Kwamsisi project is one innovation that capitalizes most of this cultural heritage. The villagers of Kwamsisi have demonstrated how decentralized education decision making can operate at village level. Through village committees, the people of Kwamsisi, have been involved in the identification of learning needs for the community so that curriculum is one that the entire community perceives as being relevant to their needs. Secondly, the villagers at large are actively involved in the educational process by working together pupils on development projects, traditional arts, crafts, drama, music and dance. Just like in Benin, the skilled artists and craftsmen in the village community become instructors in these skills.

Through this effort, Kwamsisi has attempted to design a curriculum suitable to the needs and resources of the local committee, integrate school and society, and make use of the structure of village organization to involve the entire community in the educational venture. The curriculum is broad and caters not only for school children but also the adult population. It covers four main areas:

- o literacy and numeracy
- o citizenship or political education
- o self-help and cultural activities
- o environmental studies

Involving the community in primary education is much easier than involving them in secondary education because the primary school is situated in the village and the jurisdiction of primary education in many African countries is in the hands of local educational auhtorities. Secondary schools, on the other hand, are locationally divorced from the local environment and administratively secondary schools are centrally managed from regional and/or national level.

The involvement of the local community in primary education at Kwamsisi, nevertheless, is relevant to decentralized decision making in secondary education because the shared diagnosis of needs and planning of educational content at the primary level can guarantee relevance in education. Since the purposive of secondary education is to develop further, the knowledge and skills attained at primary school, the connection between two levels in as far as decision making is concerned is thus established. In addition the involvement of the people in primary education paves way for participation in decision making at secondary school level.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design and procedures which were employed to accomplish the objectives of the study. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses sampling procedures. The second section is concerned about the data collection instruments employed in the study. The last section covers procedures used in data collection and analysis.

Sampling Procedures

The target population in this study consisted of secondary school teachers, heads of secondary schools, professional and administrative staff of the Ministry of Education and Culture, secondary school students, and parents whose children were currently enrolled in secondary schools. Stratified random sampling was used to select schools involved in the study. The criteria for selecting the schools was based on type of school and situation (Table 3.1).

A total of eleven secondary schools about eight per cent of public secondary schools in the country were involved in this study. From the eleven schools 159 students, about 15 per cent of the student population in the selected schools and 3 per cent of students enrolled in

secondary schools in the whole country, participated in the study. This sample was randomly sampled from the eleven schools on the sample.

TABLE 3.1

CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS BASED ON TYPE AND SITUATION.

School	Type	Situation
A	Co-Education Boarding	Urban
B	Co-Education Boarding	Rural
C	Boys Boarding	Urban
D	Boys Boarding	Rural
E	Boys Day +	Urban
F	Boys Day +	Rural
G	Girls Boarding	Urban
H	Girls Boarding	Rural
I	Co-Education Day	Rural
J	Co-Education Day	Urban

\+ Schools with Limited boarding facilities.

Ideally, one would have liked to involve all students in all forms in the schools. However, this was not be possible for several reasons. First, form 2 and 4 are examination classes and therefore, it was not be possible for the investigator to draw a sample from these two classes because the Ministry restricts the involvement of such students in issues other than those directly related to instruction. As for form one students, their less than one year experience in secondary school education would have not elicit sufficient responses for generating

conclusions about curriculum and instructional decision making.

Ninety teachers, about seven per cent of secondary school teachers in public schools in the country were randomly selected and asked to respond to the teachers' questionnaire. All heads of schools in the twelve sampled schools were involved, and in addition, thirty more randomly selected, and asked to respond to the heads of schools' questionnaire.

The criteria for selecting parents and guardians in the study was based on whether they lived in rural or urban Malawi. A ration of one to three, that is , out of one urban parent/guardian, three rural parents/guardians participated in the study. This ratio is arbitrary because the ratio of parents living in urban areas and those living in rural areas is approximately 1 to 9. But this ratio is reduced when we consider the fact that many urban dwellers become guardians of secondary school students because they are responsible for paying school fees and supporting them. This was, therefore, the justification for arbitrarily scaling down the urban-rural parents/guardian ratio. The respondents were stratified into rural and urban categories and then randomly sampled by using the 1:3 ratio described above. A total of 60 parents/guardians were sampled and questionnaires were mailed out to them. Parents/guardians

addresses were obtained during the administration of the students' questionnaires at the various schools.

As there were a limited number of officials directly involved in curriculum planning and decision making at the Ministry of Education and Culture headquarters, no rigid selection procedure was followed, instead the position and duties performed by the officials and their willingness to participate in an interview, was taken into consideration.

Instruments for Data Collection

There were two instruments for data collection for the field research, namely: the questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Four questionnaires were developed to collect data from the four different groups of respondents. There were:

1. A questionnaire for students (Appendix E).
2. A questionnaire for teachers (Appendix F).
3. A questionnaire for heads of schools (Appendix G).
4. A questionnaire for parents (Appendices H and I).

In-depth interview techniques were used in this study. Taylor et al. (1984) define in-depth qualitative interview as "repeated fact to face encounters between the researcher and informants directed towards understanding informants perspective on their lives, experiences or situations as

expressed in their own words" (Taylor et al. 1984:77). This technique enabled the researcher to get more information from the interviews which would normally not be expressed in a mailed questionnaire. A structured interview format was chosen as appropriate for the study because it elicited from the interviewees what the researcher considered to be important questions relative to curriculum planning and decision making in secondary schools. The structured questions enabled the researcher to focus on issues directly related to the study and elicit, detailed and relevant data that were qualitatively analyzed. The interview guide were sequenced into topics and sub-topics under which carefully structured questions were posed. The questions were open ended but others were specific to an issue. The open ended questions were followed up by clarification probes in order to...

> ...deepen the response to a question, to increase the richness of the data being obtained and to give cues to the interviewee about the level of response...desired (Patton, 1980:238).

The investigator's experience as an educationalist in Malawi for the past twelve years, enabled him to focus on curriculum planning and decision making issues on an <u>apriori</u> basis. As a matter of fact this experience shaped and focused the interviews. It also enabled the

investigator to gain confidence and cooperation from the interviewees. Commenting on this issue, House (1977) says:

> [informants do not want a neutral evaluator, one who is unconcerned about the issues. A person on trial would not choose a judge totally removed from his[/her] social system... the evaluator must be seen as caring, as interested, as responsive to the relevant arguments. He must be impartial rather than simply objective (House, 1977:45).

Subjectivity, is the most frequent charge levelled against qualitative methodology because the data are gathered through opinion, perception, impression and intuition. Quantitative methodologists have argued that subjectivity is eliminated by maintaining distance, in this instance from the interviewees; using quantitative measurements; manipulation of isolated variables; and conducting experimental designs. This seems to suggest that such type of methodology is immune from bias. Patton, arguing in favor of qualitative methodology has said: "numbers do not protect against bias; they merely disguise it" (Patton, 1980:338). This indeed has been proved to be the case in many quantitative studies. On maintaining distance, Scriven, (1972a) argues that "distance does not guarantee objectivity; it merely guarantee distance" (Patton, 1980:337).

In this study bias was controlled during the data collection phase by posing open ended questions and not eliciting choices between alternative answers to the pre-

formed questions. To check the interviewees' honesty and truthfulness about answers to specific issues, some questions were repeated and/or paraphrased. In addition, the comparison of responses to the same set of questions across the interviewees enabled the investigator to get a more balanced picture about curriculum planning and decision making process.

The interviews were conducted in a congenial atmosphere, to reduce both the interviewer's "threat quotient and exoticism quotient for [interviewees]" Miles et a. (1984:233). In the case of the questionnaires, similar questions appear in the students, teachers and heads of schools questionnaire. The responses from these questions will be carefully analyzed so as to minimize bias.

This research design does not hold an either/or position regarding qualitative and quantitative methodology. Both methodologies can be used in a social research of this nature. Quantitative methodology is useful when dealing with a large sample. Since the questionnaires were sent to over two hundred and sixty respondents, basic quantitative procedures were employed in order to tabulate opinions, views and facts held by respondents about curriculum decision making process.

Document Analysis

This research also used documents and records on education available at the National Archives, Chancellor College Library of the University of Malawi, the Malawi Institute of Education, and open records at selected secondary schools. This was done in order to:

(a) understanding the educational planning and decision making process in general and curriculum planning and decision making process in particular, from a historical perspective. This is very important because today's planning and decision making processes have been influenced by the past, this not withstanding the changes that have taken place in Malawi since independence.

(b) enable the researcher cross validate factual information obtained in current education documents and records with the information obtained from the questionnaires and interviews. The study of the primary and secondary sources will, in addition, provide useful data which in certain circumstances may not be well grasped by the respondents or worse still, unknown to them.

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

The teachers' and heads of schools' questionnaires were mailed to the respective respondents with a covering letter briefly stating the purpose of the study. As for the student's questionnaire, the researcher and his assistants visited the sampled schools in order to brief the students and clarify any issue(s) arising out of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire for parents was administered in a special way. First, the questionnaire was written in both English and Chichewa, the national language. Second, since the names of the parents/guardians were obtained from students at the sampled schools, arrangements were made to brief those students whose parents/guardians were to respond to the questionnaire so that during the vacation, they could assist them in interpreting some of the questions in the questionnaire. This was also invaluable for parents/guardians who couldnot read and write in English or Chichewa.

Once the data collection exercise was completed the questionnaires were content analyzed and some statistical procedures were used to illustrate variation of responses to specific issues raised in the study, Cross-analysis of two or more questions raised in the study was done to check for consistency and/or contradictions between the various

data sources. The interviews were transformed into a coherent narrative and then content analyzed.

The descriptions and insights from this study enabled the investigiator to draw conclusions regarding the current and future trends in curriculum planning and decision making process in Malawi. In addition, a curriculum and decision making framework based, opinions of the various people involved in the study, on the reality of the Malawian situation and from theory will be presented. In order to apply curriculum theory into practice, it is important for the curriculum theorist to know in greater detail, the situation in which that theory will operate and to test the trends in thinking among the people to be affected by the change. This enables the curriculum theorist to modify certain concepts and principles in the theoretical framework to the reality of practice. The primary objective of this study is thus, to use the descriptive and prescriptive data obtained in this study to improve curriculum planning and decision making process in secondary schools in Malawi.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current curriculum planning and decision making process in Malawi to see if it fits into the general typology of centralized decision making systems. Second, to develop a framework for involving teachers, students, parents and the general public, in curriculum planning process.

Before the findings are presented, it must, however, be pointed out that when the researcher was conducting the research between mid-1987 and the end of 1989, the government had begun embarking on the process of decentralizing the educational system. This decision was based partly on the recommendations made by the Educational Sector Review Report of 1988 and another review based on the findings of the 1988 report. The latter was conducted in 1989. Once approved, the 1989 Review will become the plan of action for instituting major reforms in the entire educational sector.

It was not possible for the researcher to make reference to the 1989 review document because by the time the field work was being concluded in December 1989, the

document was not yet approved by the government and was, therefore, not accessible to the public.

Under these circumstances, one might have expected the results to be mixed in that some of the respondents would have been looking at secondary education from the stand point of the current educational reforms. That this was not the case, as the results will show below, is not surprising because, the decentralization process has just begun and its impact has not yet been felt by teachers, students, heads of schools, parents and the general public. This is to be expected because major changes such as those envisaged in the decentralization plan, take time to be implemented, institutionalized and felt.

The Organizational and Decision Making Structure of the Education System in Malawi

The formal educational system in Malawi consists of three levels, namely, primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary education lasts for eight years and out of the those who successfully complete the program, about 13% enter secondary education. This serious bottleneck is presently being solved by encouraging students to enrol at the Malawi College for Distance Education Centers (MCDEC). The MCDE centers are an alternative route to acquiring secondary education. The other proposed solution is to have some of the schools operate a double shift system.

Secondary education has a four year duration leading to the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE). The first two years prepare students for the Junior Certificate Examination (JCE) which students take at the end of Form 2. For some, this is their terminal point. The system has opportunities for such students to go to vocational/technical, nursing and teacher training institutions. The MSCE examination is taken in Form 4. This examination is the basis for selecting students to the University, and to technical/vocational institutions. Some of the school leavers directly join the work force where they are trained on the job. However, not al seeking for jobs are employed; the unemployment rate among school leavers is rising alarmingly. The government is trying to solve this problem by encouraging young school leavers to engage in income generating activities which can sustain their livelihood in the community. However, this will require a comprehensive review of the secondary school curriculum to ensure that it includes the necessary knowledge to change students' attitude towards work while at the same time, equipping them with socio-economic knowledge and skills.

The organizational structure of the education system is centralized in that all major decisions are taken at the Ministry Headquarters (Figure 4.1). The primary education sector, however, does have a regional and

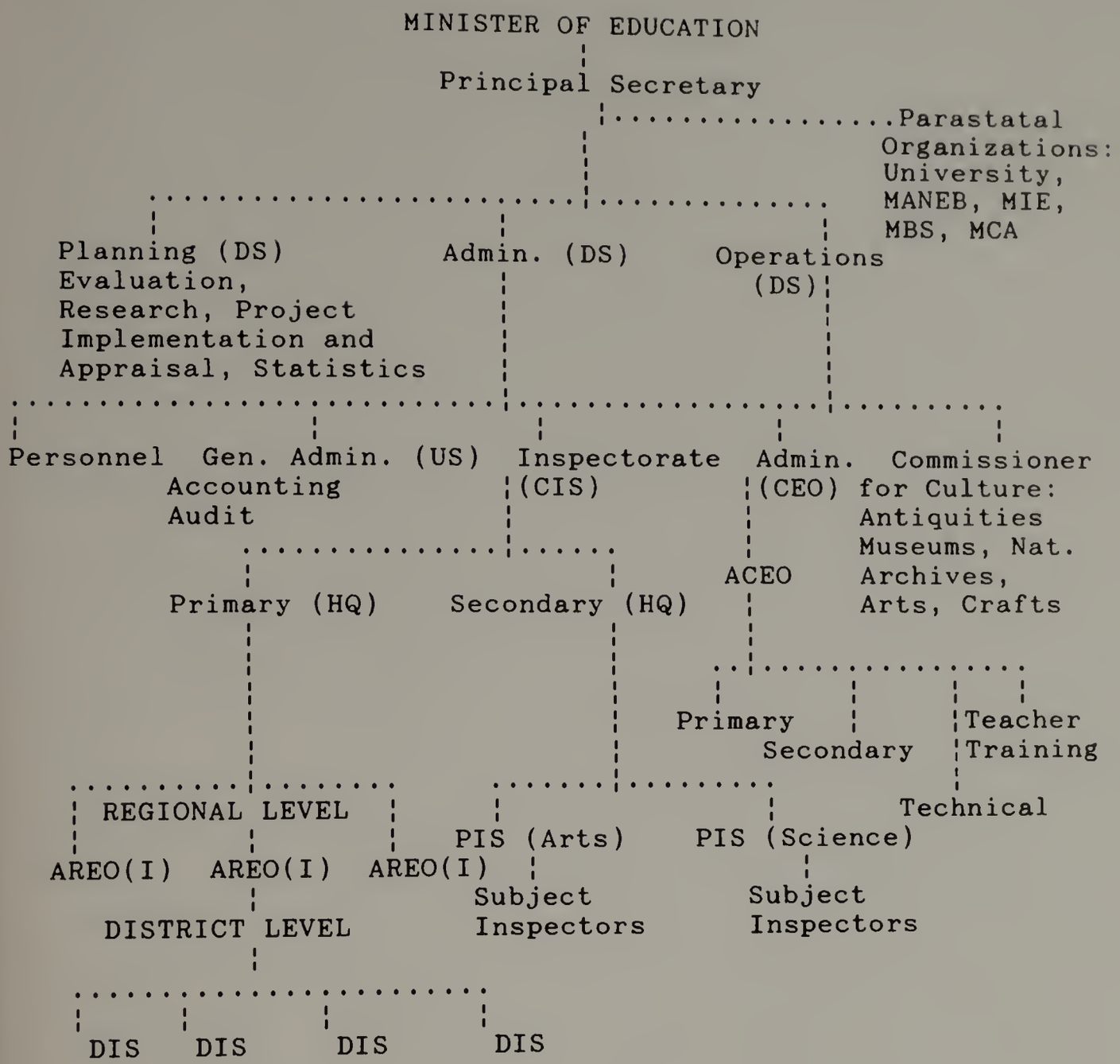


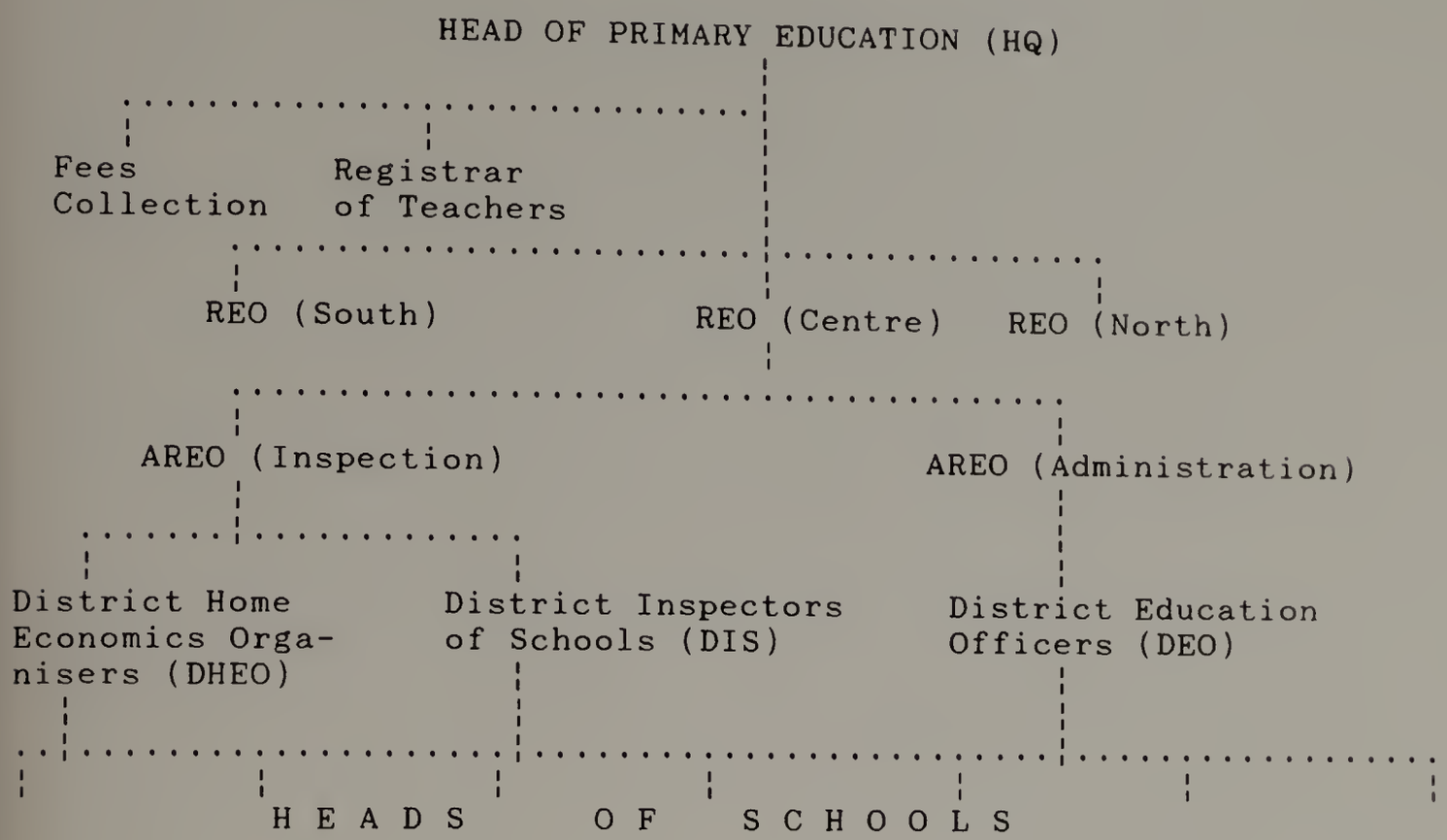
Figure 4.1: The Organizational Structure of the Educational System in Malawi.

NB: According to the new structural plans being envisaged at the Ministry of Education and Culture Headquarters, the organizational structure of the system will under go some changes.

and district sub-structure. Although this set-up gives the impression that it is decentralized (Figure 4.2), operational decisions are largely made at Headquarters. The Secondary, Technical, and Teacher Training Sections are directly administered from the Ministry Headquarters. At school level, the Headmaster/mistress is the administrative head of the school. Immediately following him/her is the deputy. Professionally, the school is organized in departments. Basically, there are three Departments: Science, Social Science, and Language. In those schools where technical subjects are offered, departments are created to cater for those subjects. Heads of Departments are nominated by the Head of the school in consultation with the teachers in the appropriate subject areas, and sometimes with the subject inspector.

In order to effectively have control over the student population, the headmaster/mistress and school staff, use elected and appointed student leaders. At the school level is the head prefect, and at classroom level are class monitors (Figure 4.3). In general, the head prefect helps the headmaster to maintain discipline in the school; he or she resolves petty issues among students. In co-educational institutions two students are elected to office - a head girl and a head boy. This is done in order to make sure that some problems and issues affecting girls, for example, are reported or handled by the head girl.

make sure that some problems and issues affecting girls, for example, are reported or handled by the head girl.



REO = Regional Educational Officer
AREO = Assistant Regional Educational Officer

Figure 4.2: The Organizational Structure of Primary Education in Malawi.

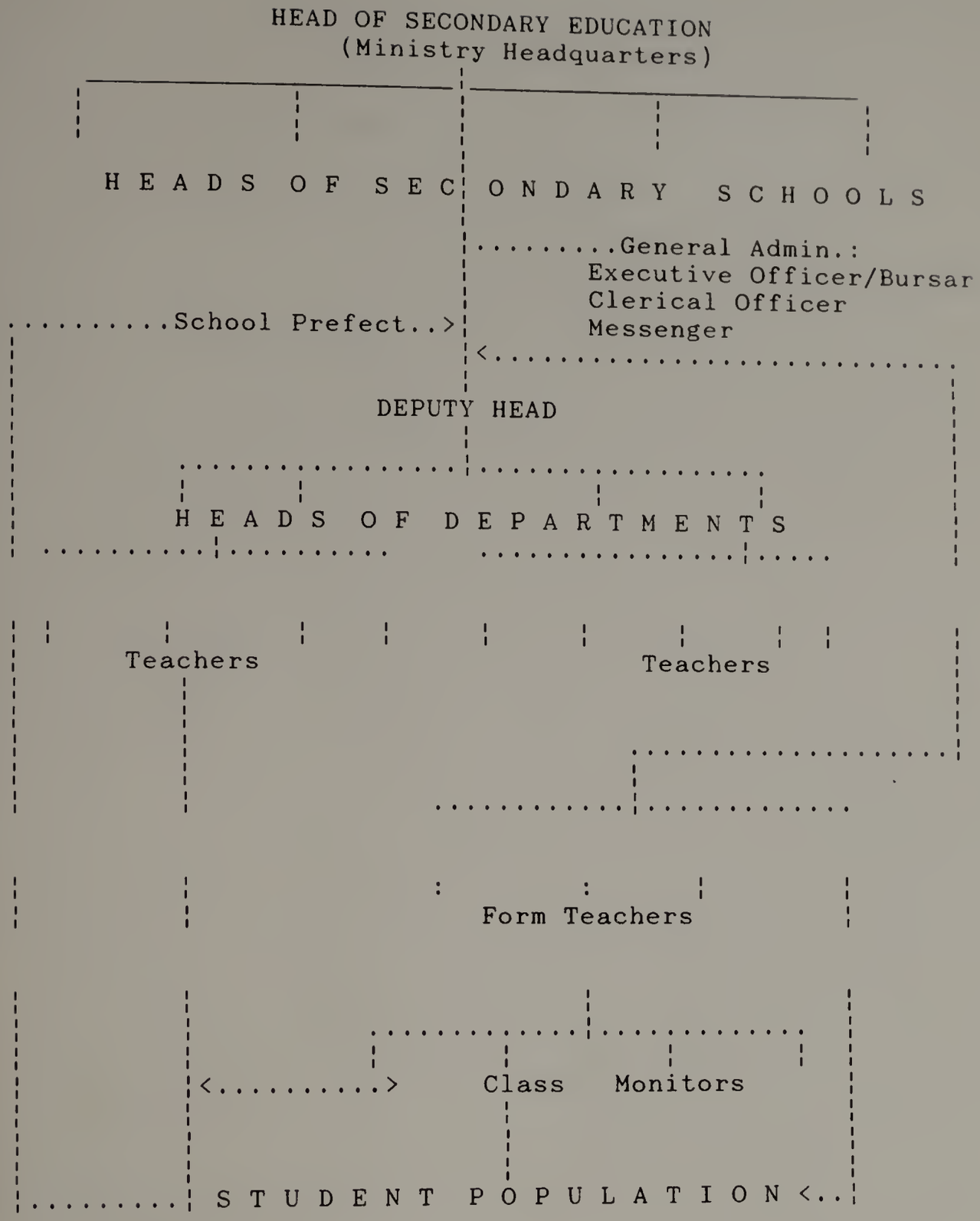


Figure 4.3: Organizational Structure of a Secondary School in Malawi.

In keeping with the objectives of this study, the following discussion will only highlight the context of secondary school curriculum and decision making process.

The two sections of the Ministry that are more involved in the administration and management of secondary schools are: the Secondary Schools Section and the Inspectorate Section. The latter is more involved with the administrative aspects of secondary schools, while the former attends to curriculum and instructional issues and other professional matters.

The Principal Educational Officer (PEO) is head of the Secondary Schools Section at the Ministry. Heads of secondary schools report directly to him on matters related to general administration. Unless of a routine nature, the PEO does not make decisions without consulting senior officers above him.

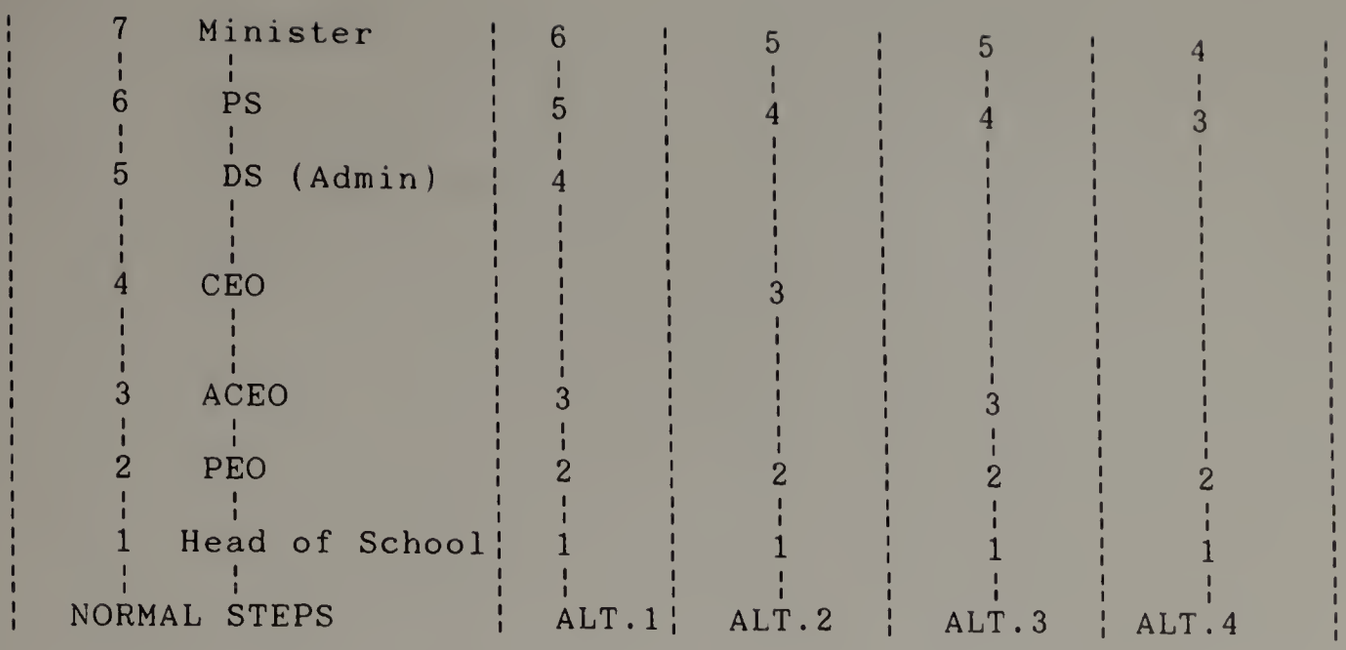
When, for example, a headmastress of a school is faced with an administrative problem from one of the schools, say a student discipline problem, she has the power to suspend the student immediately. She informs the Ministry about the suspension later, usually by telephone. However, under certain circumstances, the matter is reported to the Ministry for advice before action is taken. This is usually done when the case is very sensitive.

The written report which is filed to the ministry, states the reasons for suspending the student with

recommendations of the penalty to be imposed on the student. Although the headmastress suspends the student, the final verdict is decided by the Ministry. When the report reaches the Ministry, the registry directs the letter to the Secondary Schools Section.

The report goes through a rather lengthy reporting and decision making line, starting with the Professional Officer (P.O.) who initiates the preparation of a memorandum to the Minister. This memorandum is recast as it goes through the hierarchy. The final memorandum, giving a concise report of the case with recommendations, is submitted to the Minister for approval (Figure 4.4). When the decision is finally approved by the Minister, the information filters down back to the PEO for execution. The PEO then writes a letter to the school informing the Headmaster of the Ministry's decision.

Upon receipt of this letter, the headmastress in turn, writes a letter informing the parents or guardian of the student of the Ministry's decision. Some parents appeal against the decision by writing a letter to the Ministry or by going to the Ministry in person. Some appeals are rejected outright, while others are reviewed resulting to the upholding of the original decision, or lowering the penalty in the light of new evidence or mitigating factors.



ALT.1 = Alternative Reporting and Decision Making line.

Figure 4.4.: Decision Making Steps for Secondary Schools at Ministry of Education and Culture Headquarters.

The reporting and decision making line is obviously long, and this leads to delays and the accumulation of a backlog of unresolved or 'pending matters'. This ultimately affects the efficiency of the system.
It is true to say that in his/her day-to-day work, the PEO does not always have to follow through all the steps.
The decision hierarchy is sometimes cut short by say one or more steps (Figure 4.4). As is illustrated from the flow diagram above, the PEO can in certain circumstances by pass

the Assistant Chief Education Officer (ACEO), the Chief Education Officer (CEO) or the Deputy Secretary (DS) to expedite the decision making process, but still the case has to reach the Principal Secretary (PS) and the Minister for approval.

Of course, there are certain decisions that the PEO can make on his/her own or in consultation with his/her immediate senior officer, but these are what one would call 'routine' administrative decisions or to put it in Simon's (1960) words, programmed decisions. But even routine matters like repairs and maintenance, take a great deal of time to be attended to. One of the causes for such delays is that the majority of the secondary schools, are not warrant holders. All financial decisions and are handled by the Ministry. The horizontal channels of communication between sections at the ministry are not open enough to allow speedy transaction. For example, the Secondary and the Accounts Sections are poorly co-ordinated. One of the interviewees also mentioned of the same lack of co-ordination between the Inspectorate and the Accounts section. One of the causes of this, a number of people have alluded, is that the Accounts Section is staffed with Common Service Staff of the Civil Service who do not know or care much about the professional side of education. For example, when a Head of school has made his/her priorities, regarding say the purchase of curriculum materials, the

order is sometimes overturned for no genuine reasons. These few examples, demonstrate the point that centralized educational systems, do not only have vertical information flow problems, but also horizontal information flow problems.

Matters related to curriculum and instruction are handled by the Inspectorate. The head of the school has no decision making powers over curriculum and instruction. All issues relating to curriculum are channelled to the Ministry through the Inspectorate section. Usually, the Head of the school reports to the Subject Inspector or the Principal Inspector for Arts or Science depending on the subject. These officers take the matter up with the Chief Inspector of Schools (CIS). If the issue at hand is of a routine nature, the CIS can make a decision but if the resolution of the issue would require change in the curriculum, the CIS makes recommendations to the Minister through the Principal Secretary (PS). The PS's decision is based on the Inspectorate's recommendations. There are of course situations when the Minister can take an independent position and decide on a course of action.

This process is used by the system to evolve policy. As stated earlier by Lindblom (1969), administrators play an important role in policy making. The professional officers in the Inspectorate serve as the principal immediate source of analysis and advice for curriculum

policy in the country. These analyses help the Principal Secretary to advise the Minister on matters relating to curriculum policy. In such a situation, it is elusive to point to a particular bureaucrat as a policy maker because even the administrative head of the ministry is, defined according to statute as a policy adviser to the Minister. It is the Minister who makes policy, although as illustrated above, this policy is initiated by bureaucrats.

One should, however, not harbor the illusion that the Minister cannot initiate curriculum policy. The position of Cabinet Minister is a political position and being so, the political appointee is influenced by what politicians think should be the direction of education in the country. This influence can filter from the bottom where the national political constituency is, or from the Legislature, where elected representatives of the people from various constituencies meet or from the Cabinet or the Head of Government and State. When policy is initiated by the Minister, the Principal Secretary would clear the way for the implementation of the policy by making implementation policy. This usually comes in form of directives and circulars. The same also applies to policy initiated by the Inspectorate.

Since 1988, curriculum development activities for secondary schools were officially designated under the Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB). Previously, the

Ministry of Education and Culture was personally responsible for the renewal of syllabuses at Junior Certificate level, while the then Malawi Certificate of Education Board, the forerunner of MANEB, was responsible for the renewal of Malawi School Certificate level syllabuses. Although this was the case, the major responsibility of the Board was in aptitude testing and examinations.

The Malawi National Examination Board, is a statutory autonomous organization with its own governing board. It has, however, close affiliations with the Ministry of Education and Culture, since after all, it was founded to assist the Ministry in discharging responsibility over examinations. MANEB is headed by an Executive Secretary. The governing board is headed by a chairman.

Organizationally, MANEB has four sections, namely: the Administration Section, Examinations Section, the Aptitude, Testing and Research Section and the Data Processing Section. These sections are headed by Assistant Executive Secretaries. The figure below illustrates MANEB's organizational structure.

Since MANEB was given statutory responsibility over Curriculum development, the Board has not yet developed a separate section to handle curriculum development issues. In fact, a top official of the Ministry said that although MANEB has been given this responsibility, the Inspectorate

still has the overall responsibility for curriculum planning and development. He further stated that, MANEB's

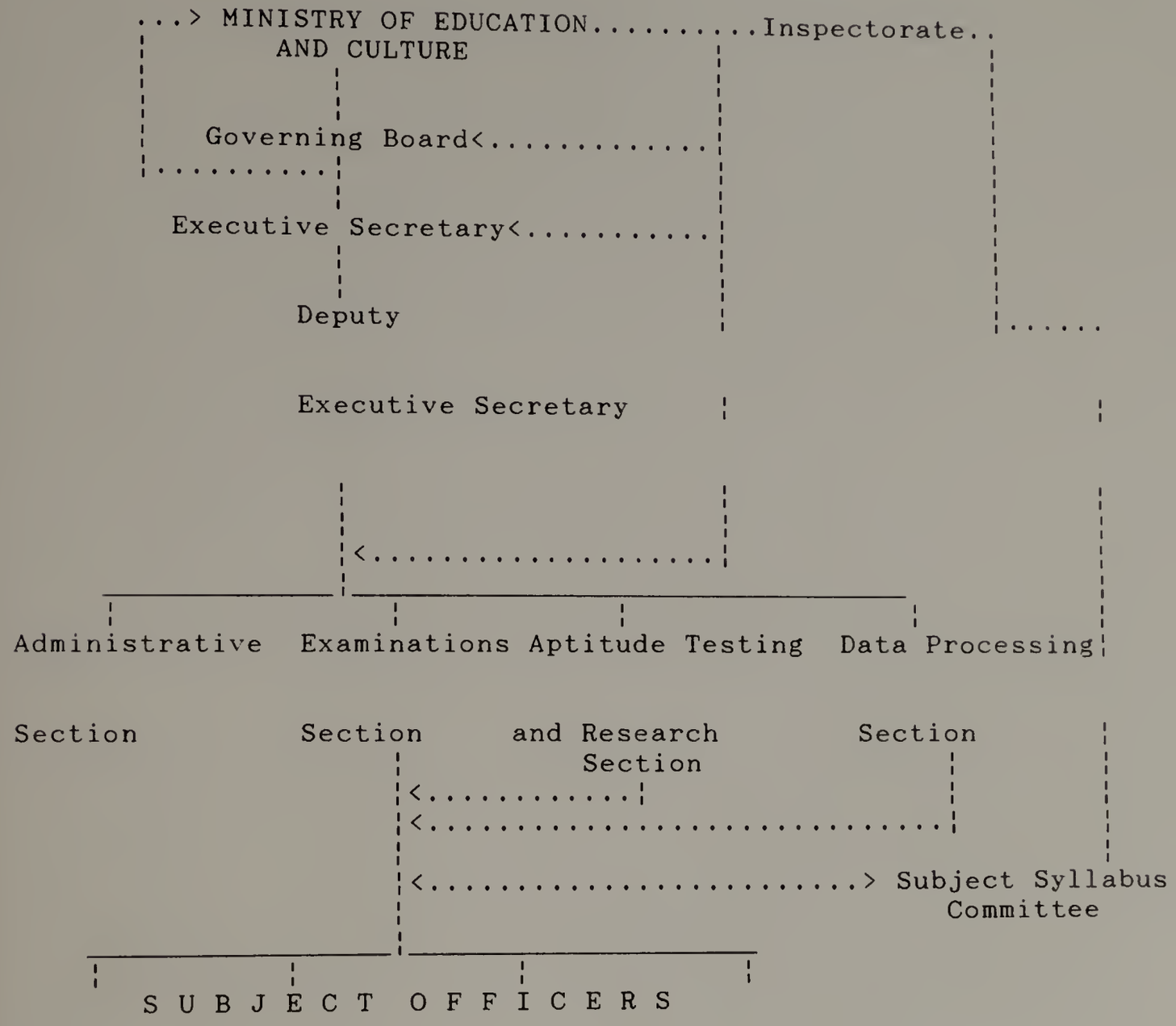


Figure 4.5: The Organizational Structure of the Malawi National Examination Board.

responsibility is over the preparation of an examination syllabus and not a teaching syllabus. The researcher remarked that it appeared that the 1988 amendment of the section of the Education Act which gave the Malawi National Examination Board responsiblity over curriculum development, should be amended again so that MANEB's role is clearly stipulated. The official seems to have agreed with the question of amendment but went on to say that, as far as Ministry's thinking about curriculum development was concerned, responsibility over secondary school curriculum development would be handed over to the Malawi Institute of Education. The latter is presently responsible for primary school curriculum development. In this respect, the Inspectorate, would be responsible for curriculum policy issues and the co-ordination of curriculum activities in the country. The official stated that the Ministry would follow the Kenyan model where the Kenya Institute of Education is responsible for curriculum development, while the Kenyan Examination Council is responsible for examinations.

The separation of the two responsibilities is important in order to make sure that the curriculum is broadly based rather than being overly influenced by examination policy and results.

To come back to the present status for secondary curriculum development, the organizational structure for

curriculum development is centralized. The following quotation, gives testimony to this.

> The introduction of a new syllabus is carried out from Ministry of Educational and Culture Headquarters to the classrooms.....through the Inspectorate and [the Malawi National Examination Board]. All issues pertaining to logistics, teacher education and training, contact with the administrative staff at various levels and the teachers, updating and evaluation of the syllabus are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture Headquarters (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1981).

The normal vehicle for curriculum and syllabus development is the subject syllabus committee (Appendix B). The subject inspector is responsible for proposing for the Ministry's approval syllabus committees for all subjects that fall under his control. Since the MANEB has taken overall responsibility over curriculum development, the subject officers at MANEB liaise with subject inspectors before and after the various committees are convened at MANEB's offices.

Each subject committee is made up of the Subject Inspector, the Chief Examiner of the subject and committee members. The committee members usually consist of people with proven ability in the subject. The various committees make recommendations to the Malawi National Examination Board and the Ministry about issues related to Junior Certificate and the Malawi School Certificate syllabi.

According to one senior official at MANEB, the committee facilitates the communication between his organization and the Ministry because the Ministry is represented in the subject syllabus committee by the Inspector, while the Subject Officer of the Examinations Section at MANEB sits in this committee. So apart from the minutes of the syllabus committees which are submitted to the Board and the Chief Inspector of Schools at the Ministry, the two members report the issues discussed to their respective responsible officers.

The researcher, however, wanted to know who approves changes in the syllabus. Was it the Board or the Ministry? He was told that any recommendations made at the syllabus committee, are taken by the Executive Secretary or his appointee to a Board meeting for approval. After this approval is made, then the matter is taken to the Minister for ministerial approval. The researcher was worried about this procedure and was imagining a situation where the Ministry would turn down the Board's decision. Upon reflection, however, it was discovered that at every level of the decision making process the Ministry is kept informed. After all when the committee sits the Inspector is there and when the Board convenes, the Principal Secretary or his representative is always present. So, areas of difference, which are bound to arise anyway, are

taken care of before the matter is taken to the Minister for approval.

Curriculum development and instructional related activities, are also undertaken by subject associations like the Geography Teachers Association, and the Association for the Teaching of English, just to mention a few. These associations play an important role in curriculum development by discussing problems and issues related to content, teaching strategies and evaluation. They develop supplementary curriculum materials for use in the schools and make appropriate recommendations to the Ministry through the Inspectorate. This communication is made easier since subject inspectors are very much involved in the activities of these subject associations.

According to the Ministry, the process of curriculum development can generally be separated into three phases, namely planning, preparation of instructional materials and implementation. The Inspector, plays a key role in all the three phases by working with the subject syllabus committee.

In most cases the Subject Inspector initiates curriculum development activities in his subject(s) by analyzing the subject against overall needs of the country, education policy, and aims of education. The results of such analysis enables Inspector to gauge the relevance of the content at any given point in time. This analysis also

helps in drawing a strategy for curriculum development which as far as secondary education is concerned, varies from Subject Inspector to Subject Inspector. To amass this base line information, subject inspectors deliberate with teachers and other educationalists specialized in the subject, and carry out surveys of the teaching of the subject in schools or feasibility studies about impending changes to be introduced in the curriculum in order to drum up opinion about subject content from teachers.

To illustrate the syllabus review process, the researcher interviewed the Inspector of Geography upon hearing that he had recently undertaken a review of the Junior Certificate syllabus (JC) The Inspector first gave a brief historical background of the JC syllabus. Since 1972, there was no major review of the syllabus. However, in 1978/79, there were some minor modifications of the syllabus. A major review of the syllabus took place in 1987 when he organized a seminar to review the syllabus and analyze its content. The seminar was attended by a panel of experienced secondary school teachers, and members of the syllabus committee who were practicing teachers.

Before the actual review took place, however, the Inspectors had to build a case for it and seek approval from the Malawi National Examination Board and the Ministry of Education and Culture. His expertise in the subject and the experiences he got from his inspection visits, clearly

indicated that the content of the syllabus was no longer addressing the needs of the students as well overall national objectives. This was not a one man job. He stated that the matter was taken up with the syllabus committee on several occasions and that in order to get more input from teachers, he mailed out a questionnaire which surveyed the opinions and attitudes of practicing teachers about the syllabus and solicited ways of improving it.

The strategies followed by subject inspectors when reviewing or renewing the syllabus vary from inspector to inspector. The personality, experience, and initiative of the respective subject inspectors, seem to play a role on the specific strategy to follow when reviewing the syllabus.

The process of secondary school curriculum change in Malawi so far, has been a step-by-step approach. This approach generally fits with the incremental change model of Lindblom and Braybrooke (1963) discussed in the literature review section of this study. The advantage of this approach is that changes are based on continuous formative evaluation of the syllabus, and may not require the structural changes as in the radical change model as described by Stufflebeam and associates (1971). These advantages however, constitute disadvantages also in that change is piecemeal and not comprehensive enough. The

change process only looks at the confines of a particular syllabus and quite often these piecemeal changes fail to address problems that arise because of the system's overall philosophy, and the entire curriculum rationale. Co-ordination of work done in the various subjects is difficult. The major reason for this is that the activities are done at different times and there is very little attempt for Inspectors to follow up work being done in other committees. This affects the sequence, balance and integration of the curriculum across all subject fields.

One senior official in the Ministry agreed with the observation of the researcher that curriculum planning and development at secondary school level is not as systematic and comprehensive as it is at the Primary school level.

Future directions for curriculum planning and development for secondary education in Malawi will take the model already in place at the Malawi Institute of Education, while the policy making and decision making aspect will remain centrally co-ordinated at the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The above description of the organizational and decision making structure of the entire system and the curriculum planning and development component of the system, was got from interviews held with officials of the Ministry and the Malawi National Examination Board. Some

of the information was secured through analysis of government documents. In addition, the critical reflection of the experience of the researcher as an educationalist both inside and outside the system, helped not only to provide coherence to the narration, but to focus on issues which he considered to be relevant to the study. Patton states:

> ....getting close enough to the situation through experience... evaluators can learn from their experiences, thereby generating personal insights (1980:337)

Issues of objectivity arise when the investigator is studying a system of which he is part of. Throughout this study, truthfulness and impartiality were upheld.

The picture portrayed above, nevertheless, would be incomplete or at worst subjective if the opinions of students, parents, teachers, and local school administrators were not sought. What follows below, therefore, are the opinions and perceptions of these people about the system in general and the curriculum decision making process in particular.

Students' Perceptions of Secondary School Curriculum and Decision Making Process

In this study, 159 form three students were involved. Fifty-seven percent were male while 43 percent

were female students. Their ages ranged from 16 years to 24 years (Table 4.1).

The majority of the students (93%) were between the ages 17 and 21. Assuming that the official starting age for primary school is 6, and allowing for one repetition year, the majority of the students should have been at least in the 17-18 age range. The reason why this is not the case is attributed to late starting age at the primary

TABLE 4.1

STUDENTS' AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age	No.	%
16	2	1.3
17	12	7.6
18	36	22.6
19	39	24.5
20	42	26.4
21	17	10.7
22	5	3.1
23	4	2.5
24	2	1.3
Total	159	100.00

Average age = 19
Median age = 19
Age range = 8

school and high repeater rates at standard 8.

In order to find out about students' opinions about curriculum planning and decision making in secondary school, several issues were posed in the questionnaire. Some dealt with the issue of participation, other dealt

with students' attitude towards the teachers, heads of schools and the system in general.

In order to find out if students participate in curriculum decision making, several questions were asked (Appendix C). The respondents were asked if the school provided ways and means of addressing their opinions and views about the curriculum. Eighty-percent answered on the affirmative. When asked about the lines of communication that they usually used when addressing curriculum and instructional issues, the most significant group of people they first contacted first were Form teachers. The list of other people in the school they first reported their problems are listed below.

TABLE 4.2

GROUPS OF PEOPLE STUDENTS FIRST CONTACT WHEN ADDRESSING CURRICULUM RELATED ISSUES

	%
Form Teacher	33
Subject Teacher	21
Class monitor	20
Head of School	3
Deputy Head	2
Other teachers	1
Total	80

Non-respondent rate on item = 20%

After reporting to their first contact person, the issue is addressed to the school staff in a hierarchy of

reporting lines which vary from very short to long. For example, when students have a problem, they contact their Class monitor. The Class monitor in turn approaches the Form teacher who in turn takes up the issue to the subject teacher in question. If the latter resolves the issue, the matter rests there, but if he/she cannot, the matter is taken to the Headmaster/mistress. The Headmaster resolve the matter in consultation with the subject teacher or includes the issue on the agenda of the next staff meeting. Some students stated that sometimes, the Headmaster takes the issue with the Ministry. In certain cases the matter is resolved when it reaches the subject teacher. The figure below illustrates the entire reporting and decision making line.

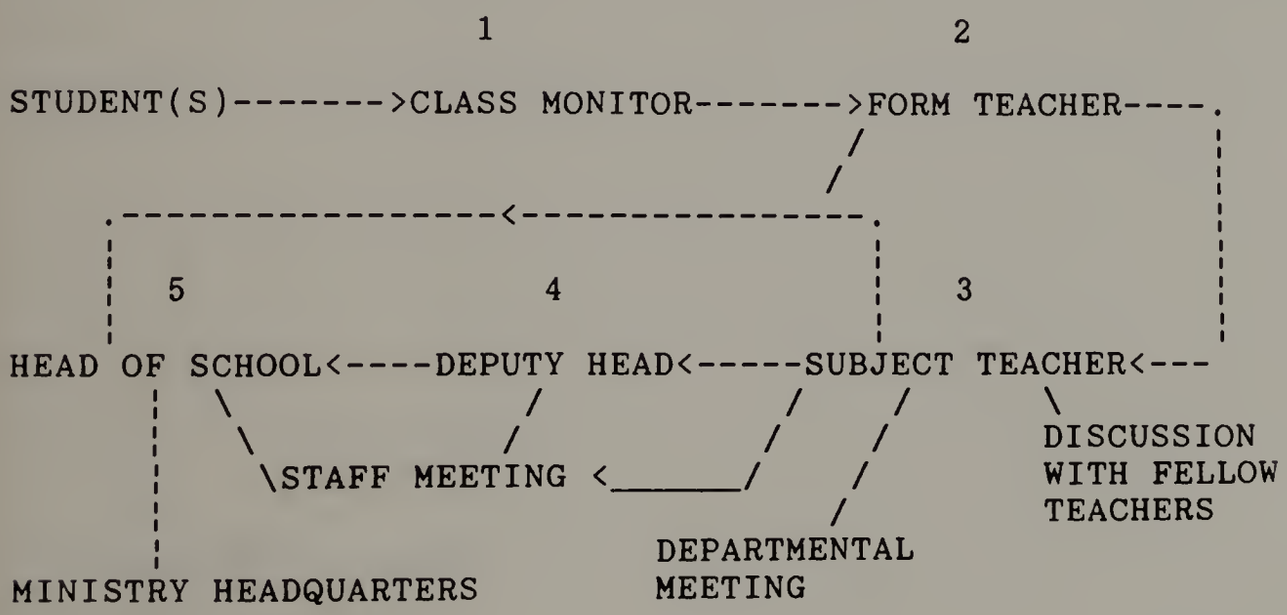


Figure 4.6 : Student Reporting and Decision Lines on Curriculum Issues.

Although the school provided the means for addressing issues, most of the students stated that there was usually very little or no change at all. Some students commented that, after the issue is addressed and reaches the headmaster, he does not take any action; problems raised by students are ignored. Other respondents said that, when the issue is taken to the subject teachers, it is left undiscussed. As shown in the figure above, monitors play a central role in relating problems to the school. The monitorial system is therefore an important part of classroom management component in a school. However, the role of monitors is affected when they are intimidated by teachers. For example, some students reported that when Class monitors take up an issue on behalf of the student, they are blamed by for questioning by the administration. This kind of reaction, usually pacifies them. The monitorial system instead of working for the interest of both the learners and the school, works for the interest of the school administration. When this happens, its effectiveness is rightly questioned by students.

Although the majority of the students were not satisfied with the outcomes of their complaints, nevertheless, a few were. These students stated that some changes did take place after problems were addressed to the school staff.

When the students were asked if there had been any changes in the curriculum for the past two years which addressed their concerns, 66% agreed that some changes had taken place and out of this figure, 52% stated that as a student body they were responsible for such changes and were in agreement with them.

When asked to recall the kind of changes that had taken place, some of the students listed the following.

TABLE 4.3

CHANGES THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE IN THE CURRICULUM OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS

Changes were observed in Math, Biology, English, Agriculture, and Home Economics.
History and Agriculture were made compulsory subjects.
Some Literature books were replaced at MSCE.
Students were not allowed to make a choice on elective subjects on their own.
The introduction of multiple choice questions in history.
As a class we were asked to drop Home Economics and Agriculture and instead took History for the first time.
Improvement in teaching methods.

The above changes were confirmed with official records to have taken place. Most of the changes were commendable but students were not happy when they were asked to drop Home Economics and Agriculture and take History for the first time in secondary school. The reasons, were economic and not curricular. Some schools were faced with financial

problems, and since Home Economics requires a lot of instructional and learning inputs, they had to cancel it in some classes and introduced history. The same applied with Agriculture; shortage of Agriculture teachers, lack of space for practical work and experimentation, and inadequate agricultural inputs, also caused some schools to extend the subject to very few classes. The other change that students did not like was when they were not allowed to make a choice of their own among the elective subjects. What often happened or happens is that students are 'forced' to take subjects which they do not like. This often results in poor performance.

The way teachers teach in class has an influence on how well students learn in class. Students' feedback in class, therefore, plays a significant role in improving instruction and learning. Student participation should not only be looked at as a situation where the students demand a voice in the affairs of the school. Active participation in class is another way in which students can practically show that they are not passive recipients of the learning process. Students were asked in what ways they give feedback to the teacher to show that he/she is effective or not. The following table summarizes the most significant answers.

Most of the ways of giving feedback to the teacher are positive, but their subtlety requires the teacher to pay

close attention to student behavior in class. However, actions like reporting the teacher to the headmaster can be counter-productive. But in most cases students do this when other means are exhausted. The researcher has been told by some teachers that some heads of schools have 'spies' who report to them on any irregularity in class!

TABLE 4.4

WAYS IN WHICH STUDENTS TELL THEIR TEACHERS WHETHER THERE ARE EFFECTIVE OR NOT.

	Frequency
By asking teachers clarifications questions.	61
The assignments and tests we do tell	26
By being attentive	11
If the teacher is not effective, the form teacher is informed and he/she in turn takes the matter up with teacher concerned.	8
By answering questions correctly	7
By actively participating in the teaching learning process	7
We inform the teacher through the class monitor	7
By boycotting the class	7
If effective, we attend all his classes	7
By praising him/her	7
By reporting the teacher to the Headmaster	6
By complaining to the teacher in a polite manner	4
By misbehaving when they teach	3
By paying no attention in class	3

When asked if they observe changes in the way teachers handle their lessons after giving them such direct and indirect feedback, 90% of the respondents agreed. When the issue was probed further to find out what type of changes

were observed in their teachers, 69% stated that they were positive.

Some students have time and again stated that it is not their responsibility to contribute to the effectiveness of instruction and learning in class. The study wanted to find out empirically how wide spread this belief was among students. Surprisingly only 13% of the respondents supported this view.

The respondents were then asked to suggest ways of helping the class improve learning. The suggestions they put forward were basically categorized into (a) those which required students to do something about it and (b) those which required the effort of the teachers and the school administration. The table below is a list of students' related efforts to improve learning. Although students saw themselves playing an important role in improving learning, they also mentioned teachers and the school administration as responsible for creating conditions for learning. Table 4.6 summarizes the most significant suggestions for improvement which were outside their purview.

For the school to create optimum conditions for learning, it requires the joint effort of student, teachers and administrators. However, in order for students to contribute, there is need them to participate in decision making.

Although the respondents have raised many issues pertaining to instruction and learning and not much about the content taught, the relevance of certain subjects or topics have been questioned by students. In order to find out what criteria the students judged the relevance of the curriculum, a list of what the researcher thought to be the bases for making such judgements was suggested.

TABLE 4.5

STUDENTS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNING IN CLASS

	Frequency
Asking questions if they did not understand a point	50
Being attentive when being taught	29
Studying hard	29
Helping one another in solving problems	20
Attending classes regularly	19
By being disciplined	17
Not making noise in class	14
Participating actively in class	13
Doing class assignments	12
Being co-operative with teachers	10
Students should encourage the growth of human relations with teachers	10
Forming discussion groups	9
Reading widely	9
Being organized in class even in the absence of a teacher	6
Being punctual in class	5
Being humble and co-operative to authorities	4
Following teachers' instructions	4
Utilizing their prep time	3
Attending evening studies	3
Share and exchange learning resources	2

TABLE 4.6

A LIST OF SUGGESTIONS ADDRESSED TO TEACHERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION FOR IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNING TO TAKE PLACE

	Frequency
Regular administration of tests	14
Teachers should be punctual for classes	9
Teachers should not cancel classes	7
They should be committed to their work	7
Teachers should be tolerant to students	5
The school should be well supplied with resources	5
Evening studies should be well supervised	3
The school should have adequate staff	3
Teachers must be well prepared for classes	3
They should be accessible	2
They should give students extra work	2
They should use simple language	2
They should motivate students	2

The respondents were asked to rate the answers on a scale of 1 to 6. The following table shows the students' rating.

Although the content in the school curriculum is relevant, some students stated that the way it is taught affects its relevance in that, some teachers do not make an attempt to relate the issues discussed in class with real life problems and situations. As a result, the content is seen as irrelevant.

TABLE 4.7

STUDENTS' CRITERIA FOR JUDGING THE RELEVANCE OF THE CURRICULUM

Reason	Rating
Past examination papers do not strongly reflect items or questions from those topic	1 (High)
The topics or subject content do not relate real life problem solving situations	2
They are not relevant to the job market	3
They are too theoretical	4
The way they are taught affect their relevance	5
I perform poorly in those topics/subjects	6 (Low)

Since the education system is centralized and that inspectors of schools play an important role in making curriculum decisions, students were asked if Inspectors of schools discussed curriculum and instructional related issues with them when ever they visited the school. Eighty-two percent of the respondents said that Inspectors did not hold any discussions with them. When asked if they felt the need to discuss with them, 64% said agreed that they would have liked to hold discussions with them. The specific issues for discussion varied. The following are, however, the most significant issues (in terms of frequency) that students put forward.

TABLE 4.8

ISSUES STUDENTS WANTED TO DISCUSS WITH INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

Issues	Frequency
Shortage of school facilities e.g. Lab equipment, textbooks, exercise books etc.	22
Teachers' teaching methods	20
Shortage of staff	16
Teachers attitude towards work	11
Teachers behavior towards students	10
Students' welfare e.g overcrowding, poor diet	5
Subject offerings in the curriculum	5
Criteria for selection of teachers to teach senior classes	4
Teaching learning process	4
How to manage our studies	4
Poor school administration	3
Length of the syllabus	3
School rules and regulations	2
Transferring of teachers	2
Irregular inspection visits	2
Relevance of topics in the curriculum	2
Length of the syllabus	3

Some of the issues raised above by students are self explanatory while others are not. On the issue of teaching methods, the students cited a common practice by some teachers of giving notes to the class instead of teaching. This resulted, they stated, to many topics not being understood. On teachers' attitude towards work they said that some teachers showed lack of interest in their job by coming late to class, cancelling lessons and not correcting students' work on time. On the issue of subject offerings in the curriculum, they wondered why certain subjects were

offered in some schools and not in others. They also wanted to tell the Inspectors that the syllabus was too long and this often resulted in superficial coverage of subject content. Some of the respondents also wanted to register their dissatisfaction about the selection of teachers to handle senior classes. The list of complaints is very long and some of the issues they wanted to discuss with Inspectors could as well could have been tabled with the Headmaster/mistress. One possible reason for this, as some respondents stated above, is that when such issues are presented to the school they are not attended to. In fact, some respondents stated that students who raise such issues are reprimanded for doing so. This is another indication of lack of participation in the affairs of the school by the students. Since Inspectors of schools do not normally talk to students when they visit schools, the issues raised above, are important enough for them to hold discussions with students' representatives on issues that relate to learning when they visit schools.

Educationalits agree on the importance of the role inspectors play in classroom instruction and learning. In this study, students were asked about their perception of the role of inspectors. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents perceived inspectors as playing an important role. The most significant reasons were that teachers teach well in class for fear of being found out unprepared

in class. Related to this reason was the fact that since inspectors are responsible for the promotion of teachers, the latter always work hard. Other reasons were more specific to teaching. The respondents said that inspectors advise teachers on how to improve their work. They also are in a position to judge in the case of poor performance at a school whether this was due to teachers or students. Some respondents also mentioned the fact the inspectors ensure that the school is well administered and teachers conduct themselves well.

However, some students stated that there was no difference in the way teachers teach because after all, inspectors do not visit schools regularly. Other students stated that Inspectors are not effective because they do not speak to students nor check their work.

When students were asked what they thought the relationship between their teachers and inspectors were, 23% stated that the relationship was very good, while 28% said it was good. Twenty-six percent of the respondents thought that it was satisfactory, and only 23% rated the relationship as poor.

For effective decisions to be made in schools, students should be given an opportunity to participate in decision making. There are many areas in the school in which students can participate in decision making. Students were given a list of school committees and rate

them according to their preference. The following table shows the ratings in percentages.

TABLE 4.9

AREAS WHICH STUDENTS CHOSE TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL

NAME OF COMMITTEE	RATING IN PERCENTAGE High----------->Low				
	1	2	3	4	5
Curriculum Planning	47	21	12	5	13
Disciplinary	14	25	25	29	13
Boarding and Welfare	12	16	27	25	6
Subject Syllabus	16	28	14	23	12
Sports	8	8	11	15	54

The percentages do not add up to 100 because of rejected items.

Forty-seven percent of the students put curriculum planning committee as their first choice while 54% of the respondents rated the sports committee fifth. The following table shows the students' choices of the committees on a rating scale of 1 to 5.

To find out the order in which the above groups were rated by the students, the percentage points scored by each group in the first and second choice were added and the groups' totals ranked. To verify the order, the percentage points for the 7th and 8th choice were also added and ranked in reverse order.

TABLE 4.10

STUDENTS' RATING OF THE SUGGESTED SCHOOL COMMITTEES

NAME OF COMMITTEE	RATING	
Curriculum Planning Committee	1	(high)
Subject Syllabus Committee	2	
Disciplinary Committee	3	
Boarding Committee	4	
Sports Committee	5	(Low)

To find out the order in which the above groups were rated by the students, the percentage points scored by each group in the first and second choice were added and the groups' totals ranked. To verify the order, the percentage points for the 7th and 8th choice were also added and ranked in reverse order.

The students were further asked reasons for choosing to serve in the curriculum related committees. Basically, students wanted to be represented in these committees in order to make sure that the curriculum was relevant by including content that related to real life problems. They were also interested in selecting content that was relevant to their needs and interest. Others saw this as an opportunity in which they would familiarize themselves with the objectives and content of the curriculum. Yet others, were interested in knowing more about the curriculum so that they would assist in its implementation. This concurs

with the students interest, as observed earlier, of wanting to contribute to the learning process.

Some students, however, did not want to participate in the two committees because they said that these activities mainly concerned school administrators and teachers. In addition, a few students stated that they were not qualified to perform such tasks.

The students were also asked to choose from a list of eight groups of people they would prefer working with. Table 4.11 shows their overall preferences.

TABLE 4.11

STUDENTS PREFERENCES OF GROUP TO WORK WITH IN CURRICULUM RELATED COMMITTEES

	RATING IN PERCENTAGE High----------> Low							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Local Politicians	7.7	4.4	3.8	9.0	15.7	15	13	21.5
Heads of Schools	18.5	18.4	29.5	7	9.5	2.6	7.5	3.45
Teachers	8.4	18.9	17.9	24.6	8.3	16.7	12	8
Fellow Students	11	9.5	8.4	10.7	13	17.5	8	9.7
Religious Leaders	3.1	7.3	5.5	5.9	10.5	13	14	10.2
Ordinary members of the community	3.7	8.3	8.3	7.4	13.6	11.3	18	22
Curriculum Specialists	17.9	17	10	11.1	9.2	9.1	6.3	6.6
Inspectors of Schools	21.2	17.4	7	7.9	4.2	7.45	8.7	5.6

The percentages do not add up to 100 because of rejected responses.

The respondents ranked inspectors of schools, heads of schools and curriculum specialists high. Local politicians and religious leaders were the least preferred. The table below summarizes the students rating.

TABLE 4.12

STUDENTS' RATING OF THE VARIOUS GROUPS OF PEOPLE

	RATING	
Inspectors of Schools	1	(High)
Heads of Schools	2	
Curriculum Specialists	3	
Teachers	4	
Fellow Students	5	
Ordinary members of the community	6	
Local Politicians	7	
Religious Leaders	8	(Low)

Students were asked to give reasons for choosing such groups of people to work with in the various committees suggested. Since this study is focussing on curriculum decision making, only those reasons pertaining to the curriculum committees will be mentioned.

Students wanted to work with inspectors of schools for several reasons. First, they stated that they would guide the committee on policy matters, second, they would provide the committee information about the classroom and what was happening in other schools. Third, they would communicate the committee's decisions quickly to the Ministry and

finally, since they were involved in implementing the curriculum, they would be in a position to provide the school with curriculum materials. Still, a few respondents thought that they would not be helpful because they visited schools irregularly.

Heads of schools were preferred by students for several reasons. The most significant reasons were that they had the authority to implement the committees' decisions, they were aware of the problems faced by the school, and they are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the curriculum in the school. Finally, they would be in a position to communicate the committees' deliberations to parents, students, teachers and the Ministry.

Curriculum specialists were chosen because they would help in selecting relevant content and sequence content according to difficulty level. Other respondents said that they would also help teachers to organize curriculum activities and assist teachers on matters concerning instruction.

Although teachers came fourth on the list, good reasons were said about them. Students stated that it would be easier to work with them. They also stated that as teachers, they know students' needs and problems better. They would, therefore, clarify students problems to the committee. Another significant reason was that teachers

would communicate the committees' decisions to the class and implement them.

Overall, the students rated themselves as a group fifth, but offered valid reasons for wanting to a participate in decision making. They said that since they are the ones facing problems, they would articulate their learning problems better and suggest solutions to them. They would also contribute to needs assessment and ensure that topics of their interest were included in the curriculum. In addition, they would communicate committees' decisions to fellow students.

Some respondents did not, however, see students' role positively. They said that students were lazy and ignorant and could contribute very little to curriculum planning. Others said that they do not know what the future holds for them and hence, they could not help in curriculum planning. One respondent said "They are not dependable; they may say yes when they meant no."

In general students had low opinion of ordinary members of the community as members of the two committees. They said because of their limited knowledge, they would contribute very little to education. They also stated that they do not know the syllabus and much about what goes on in the school. As such, they would not be the best judges of school programs. However, for the few students who preferred working with them, they offered good reasons for

working with them. Basically, they said that as members of the society they have a right to be represented in the committees. Other reasons were that they know problems faced by students, they would enrich the curriculum by contributing content about life in the village and could contribute some beautiful ideas which other members can not think of. In addition, some respondents said that by including them in the committee, they would help the school in acquiring school facilities. Lastly, one student saw their inclusion in the committees as a learning process; they would learn a lot from the deliberation process. The researcher saw this as a powerful reason for including ordinary members of the community in school activities.

Local politicians were the least preferred by students. The reasons for not wanting to include local politicians were that students perceived them to be less concerned with education in general and curriculum issues in particular. They also said that the committee would not be free to discuss some issues for fear of being arrested. For those students who preferred to work with local politicians, they said some positive remarks about them. They said that the school curriculum includes some political issues, and including them on the committee would help members understand such issues. Since local politicians work with the ordinary people in the villages, some respondents said that they would be in a position to

analyze societal needs and problems better, and also enrich the curriculum with cultural content. They would also help in including content in the curriculum which would address the four cornerstones of the Malawi Congress Party which are: Unity, Loyalty, Obedience and Discipline.

In order of importance students considered the following areas as priority areas and thus requiring direct participation in decision making by the student community. The following results were obtained.

TABLE 4.13

AREAS STUDENTS CONSIDERED AS PRIORITY AREAS REQUIRING DIRECT PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

	RATING IN PERCENTAGES					
	High ----------> Low					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Discipline	42	16	12.5	7.6	7.2	7.9
Curriculum and Instruction	20.2	18.6	16.7	12	13	6.5
Food and Catering	4.6	17.7	17.8	19.6	17	19.6
Entertainment and Leisure	8.4	9	15	15	22.5	25.3
Building and Grounds Maintenance	3	6.8	13.7	15.2	22.4	22.8

An analysis of the above table shows that students considered discipline as a priority area followed by supervision of study and library periods. The least area

of priority was on the maintenance of school grounds and buildings. The following table below shows the ratings in order of priority.

TABLE 4.14

STUDENT RATING OF AREAS STUDENTS WANTED TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISION MAKING

AREA	RATING	
Discipline	1	(High)
Supervising study and Library periods	2	
Curriculum and Instruction	3	
Food and Catering	4	
Entertainment and Leisure	5	
Building and Grounds maintenance	6	(Low)

In the table above, student rated activities to do with school discipline very high. The reason for rating this high is that, in general, penalties for breaking school rules and regulations in schools are very tough. The impression one gets here is that students want to involve themselves in determining discipline cases in order to lessen some of these penalties, and also to ensure fairness. Curriculum and instructional related issues did fare very well on the rating and this is evidence of the interest and commitment most students have on education.

TABLE 4.15

THE EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

EDUCATIONAL STATUS	No.	%
Cannot read and write	2	5
Have not attended formal education but can read and write	1	2.5
Have been to school and can read and write	10	25
Completed Primary Education	4	10
Completed Junior Secondary Education	6	15
Completed Secondary Education	10	25
Possess a College/University degree	6	15

Non-respondents on the item = 2.5%

In most cases, such members normally have, by Malawian standards, some educational background. It is also often argued, in family circles, that the best person to take care of the student's school related problems, should be that with a good education in order to facilitate communication between the school and home. It is not surprising, therefore, to see that 55% of the respondents had completed secondary education. A methodological explanation is that, perhaps, the sample was small. A radical explanation could be that those who come from families with a sound education are also keen to send their children to school and by the same token, children from these families are educationally motivated.

The study was also interested in looking into what these parents/guardians did for a living. The table below, lists down the occupations the respondents stated.

TABLE 4.16

A LIST OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS' OCCUPATIONS

OCCUPATION	No.	%
Farming	13	32.5
Teaching	9	22.5
Company/Factory employee	5	12.5
Private Business	4	10
Working (Nature of work not specified)	3	7.5
Clinical Officer	1	2.5
Supermarket Manager	1	2.5
Senior Ophthalmic Assistant	1	2.5
Accounts Assistant	1	2.5
Copy typist	1	2.5
TOTAL	39	97.5

Non-respondent rate on item = 2.5%

The table above, strengthens the argument that most of the parents/guardians have a regular source of income.

In order to find out about parental participation in curriculum related activities, the respondents were asked what school related activities they were involved in the past year. Most of the activities mentioned were not related to curriculum and instruction (Table 4.17).

Familiarity with the secondary school curriculum is one of the important factors that bring make parents to

participate in curriculum decision making. This participation does not only mean parents' physical presence at the school to attend meetings or involve themselves in other learner centered activities. The development of

TABLE 4.17

SCHOOL RELATED ACTIVITIES THAT PARENTS PARTICIPATED

ACTIVITY	No.	%
Religious activities	3	17.6
Sports	3	17.6
Festivals	2	11.7
Geographical studies	2	11.7
History Research work	1	5.8
Wild life Club activities	1	5.8
Self help activities	1	5.8
Dances	1	5.8
Watching Films	1	5.8

Non-respondent rate for item = 62.5%

interest about what their children learn in school is sufficient to foster home and school collaboration.

The reason why some parents and guardians cannot frequently visit schools is that secondary schools in Malawi are quite a distance away from the average students' home. Unlike primary schools, they are not 'community based' in the real sense of the word. For example, the average distance between the respondent's homes and the schools the students were attending was 109 kilometers.

Only 25% of parents and guardians were living within 5 kilometers of the secondary school their children or dependents.

Parental interest in the school curriculum depends on whether the parents are familiar with the curriculum offered in schools. When this issue was raised, 64% of the respondents stated that they were not familiar with the curriculum at all. Of the 32% who knew the kind of curriculum offered at the school the majority agreed that the knowledge and skills offered at the school reflected the needs and aspirations of the local community. They stated that the curriculum adequately covers the areas of numeracy, reading and writing and that there were some practical subjects offered in the curriculum like Agriculture, Home Economics, and Wood Work. Most of them observed that students were able to apply their skills in science and technical subjects by building bridges and bus shelters in their local areas during Youth Week. In addition, some parents stated that content of some of the subjects, reflect the culture and social life of the community.

Some of the respondents did not think that the curriculum was relevant. The most significant reason for saying this was that some schools were not offering Home Economics, Woodwork and Metal Work as elective subjects. They remarked that these subjects were practical and could

equip those students who did not make it for further education with the necessary skills for self employment.

When an inquiry was made regarding the type of knowledge and skills they thought the secondary school curriculum should emphasize, most of the respondents mentioned subject areas which were already being offered in the curriculum. However, one parent suggested that Moral Behavior be offered as a subject and another mentioned Book Keeping. The following table shows these subjects in order of frequency.

TABLE 4.18

AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS PARENTS AND GUARDIANS WANTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO EMPHASIZE

	Frequency	%
Home Economics	4	10
Technical Subjects (e.g. Wood Work and Metal Work)	4	10
Agriculture	3	7.5
Mathematics	2	5
Physical Science	1	2.5
English	1	2.5
Geography	1	2.5
History	1	2.5
Bible Knowledge	1	2.5
Moral Behavior	1	2.5
Book Keeping	1	2.5

Parents' interest in the education of their children is reflected in the effort they make to follow up their progress at school. The respondents were asked if they follow up the progress of their children or dependents at school. Ninety percent said they did. When asked what means they used to follow up students progress, 64% said that they did this by checking the school reports which they received from school at the end of each school term. Twenty-eight percent inspected school work and asked questions related to the work. Only 6% (2) of the respondents visited the teachers concerned. Apart from receiving report cards, the parents/guardians were asked what other means of communication they maintained with the school. Thirty-five percent stated that the report cards were the only means of communication with the school, 21% visited the school to meet with the Headmaster/mistress and some of the teachers. Sixteen percent wrote letters to the school, and communicated to the school by telephone.

As to what other ways and means would promote communication and parental participation in secondary school, the respondents came up with some fine ideas. The following table shows the suggested ways in order of frequency.

Most of the ideas below, are practical and prove once again that when all concerned with the education of the youth participate in decision making, quality suggestions

come forward which if incorporated into the school's program of action, would increase the quality of education.

TABLE 4.19

OTHER WAYS OF PROMOTING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND AND THE SCHOOL

	FREQUENCY
Organizing frequent open days inviting parents to attend.	6
Writing letters to teachers and heads of schools.	4
Forming Parent-Teacher Associations.	3
Organizing annual teachers parent-teacher meetings.	1
Heads of schools should be writing letters to parents to tell them about individual student progress and behavior.	1
Arranging community work in order for students to directly contribute to community life. In this way they learn more about their community.	1
Parents should participate in the activities of the school committees.	1
Apart from the school report, the school should be sending a confidential report about academic progress and behavior to parents.	1
School magazines should be sent to parents.	1
Parents should also be involved in the various sporting activities.	1
The school should be mounting agricultural displays and invite parents and the general public.	1
Parents should be invited to main events during the school year.	1

In most developing countries, the quality of education has been, and is still going down. One of the major reasons for this trend is that the economies of most of these countries are not performing well. High debt service ratios and import bills, and a stagnating export

market, have created a budget crisis which cannot meet the cost of running the service sectors while at the same time providing the necessary capital input in the productive sectors.

In Malawi, although students pay school fees, the revenues raised is just a small percentage of the total budget for the secondary school sector. Nevertheless, the paying of school fees is a burden to most parents. While the government realizes this, there is no way it can make secondary education free as this would add more problems to the already existing financial difficulties. As of now, some schools are in dire need of repair, and there is shortage of curriculum materials, supplies and equipment. Although through World Bank financing these problems are being looked into, there will still be a lag in the effort and monies put in the school and the already existing problems. The other issue compounding the situation is that, the government is also looking at the quantitative aspects of secondary education in Malawi in order to solve the secondary school entry bottleneck.

The issue here, therefore, is to try to find ways of improving the situation outside the tax payers' money to ameliorate the situation. The World Bank (1988) has recommended that governments in sub-Saharan Africa encourage the private financing of education. Since this study has the ultimate objective of improving the quality

of secondary education in Malawi, it sees the parents and the community at large, as having some solutions to this problem.

The respondents were, therefore, asked if on top of the school fees they pay, they would contribute in money or in kind towards the improvement of the quality of education at the secondary school their children were attending. Seventy-one percent stated that they would. When asked if they would contribute to a local secondary school regardless of whether or not the children or dependents were attending school, 73% of the respondents agreed to make such donations. So, regardless of whether or not the child was attending a particular school, the majority of the parents and guardians were willing to assist the government in improving the quality of secondary schools.

Twenty-nine percent of those who said that they could not make any contributions to their children's or dependents offered the following reasons for not doing so.

Most of the reasons stated in Table 4.20 are financial; they simply cannot afford. A few respondents, however, held the attitude that the government is responsible for running the schools and that it has funds available for this purpose. This attitude is unfortunate. The investigator thinks that once parents are involved in school activities and hold discussions with school staff

TABLE 4.20

REASONS FOR NOT MAKING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SECONDARY EDUCATION

REASON	FREQUENCY
Low income.	3
School fees already too high.	2
Money for school improvement is already included in school fees.	2
Secondary schools get grants for the purpose in question.	2
So many dependents to look after.	
Cost of living is high.	
Schools should seek international grants.	1
Those who benefit from from secondary education are not the right students.	1
The contributions would not have any direct positive effect on my children.	1

about problems faced by the school, they may come to understand that, first, the government does not have adequate finances to invest in education especially when it is grappling with the big problem of providing more secondary school places for the thousands of primary school leavers. Second, that education is an important investment for their children and for the nation and, therefore, it is the duty for every able citizen to contribute towards this endeavor.

It was heartening, nonetheless, to see that those who were in favor of contributions displayed a spirit of community participation to secondary education. The following statements catch this spirit (Table 4.21).

When asked what kind of assistance they would give to the schools to improve their effectiveness, the parents and guardians did not restrict themselves to monetary contributions. They saw many other ways in which they

TABLE 4.21

REASONS FOR CONTRIBUTING TO SECONDARY EDUCATION

	FREQUENCY
To help the government in the development of the country	9
Development is not for an individual but the nation as a a whole	4
To ensure the smooth running of the schools	4
To promote the number of educated people in the country	2
Schools shape the lives of ordinary citizens for the better	2
To supplement school fees which does not suffice	1
To alleviate the chronic problems that many schools face	1
There is need for parents to contribute because in future the school will serve their children or dependents	1
The idea is good because people will contribute according to 'the size of their pockets'	1
To help those schools that have not reached the required standards	1
To improve and develop the school	

would assist the school to improve its effectiveness. They stated that they would take part in self-help projects organized by the school, and join school committees in order to offer advice to the school. At home, they would advise their children and dependents to work hard and be exemplary in behavior. They would also help them to do their assignments and projects during vacation. In addition, they would create the right learning atmosphere and give them time to do their school work.

Indeed, the latter is a very important suggestion because in some families, students are unable to do school related work because they spend most of their time helping their parents to do house chores. Some students engage themselves in some economic related activities for their personal as well as the family's benefit. Regarding house chores, female students are usually affected by this more than male students. This has a negative effect on learning and partly explains the Ministry's decision, in the late seventies, to accommodate all female students in boarding schools.

There are, indeed, many ways of participating in school activities as suggested above. But it is one thing to have an idea and its another to share it with others and find ways of transforming the idea into action. One effective way of making sure that ideas from parents are heard, is by making sure that they are represented in school committees and by conducting open meetings which would allow more people to discuss problems and issues confronting schools.

Since there are many areas of the school that parents and the community can participate in, it is important to first know the areas of interest of the participants. In this study the respondents were asked in which school committees there would want to be involved in. Table 4.22, shows their preferences in order of priority.

TABLE 4.22

SCHOOL COMMITTEES PARENTS WANTED TO BE INVOLVED IN.

NAME OF COMMITTEE	RATING IN PERCENTAGES High----------> Low			
	1	2	3	4
School Disciplinary Committee	45	15	7.5	10
Curriculum Planning Committee	12.5	15	25	25
Subject Syllabus Committee	12.5	5	12.5	4.5
Boarding and Welfare Committee	10	4	12.5	5

The most popular committee was the discipline committee followed by the curriculum planning committee with subject syllabus committee coming third. The Boarding and Welfare committee was the least favored.

The most significant reasons for choosing the curriculum and subject syllabus committee touched on the issue of relevance. The respondents said that they wanted to contribute curriculum materials which were relevant to the country's needs in order to ensure that students were taught knowledge and skills that would benefit them after leaving school. In relation to this, they stated that they wanted to help in the selection of topics would be relevant to the school environment. One respondent, for example, said that the teaching and learning of science is affected because of the inclusion of topics which have very little

bearing to local environment. So, he wanted to assist in the selection of content which would offer real life examples to the students.

The parents were also able to relate the work of the other committees to learning. The reasons why the disciplinary committee came first was the firm belief by the respondents that discipline brings success. Most of them stated that they wanted to help in the maintenance of discipline among students in order to promote effective teaching and learning. Other did not restrict this to students but included school staff as well. They said that lack of discipline by teachers can affect the behavior of students since they are role models.

Although the Boarding and Students Welfare Committee fared very poorly, those who chose this committee saw the importance good accommodation and diet on learning. The respondents said that they wanted to be members of this committee to ensure that students are well accommodated and fed. This, they added, would facilitate learning.

In the committees chosen the respondents were asked to choose groups of people they would best work with from a pre-selected list. The following table shows their preferences.

An analysis of the above figures shows that the parents and guardians preferred to work with Heads of Schools and teachers. The least they wanted to work with

were ordinary members of the community and curriculum specialists. Table 4.24 is a complete order of the parents' preferences.

TABLE 4.23

GROUPS OF PEOPLE PARENTS PREFERRED TO WORK WITH IN THE CURRICULUM PLANNING AND SUBJECT SYLLABUS COMMITTEES

	RATING IN PERCENTAGES							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Local politicians	15	7.5	-	7.5	2.5	12.5	7.5	10
Heads of Schools	25	12.5	17.5	5	5	-	-	-
Teachers	17.5	20	10	12.5	2.5	5	2.5	-
Students	7.5	-	15	5	10	15	7.5	10
Religious Leaders	7.5	5	12.5	2.5	12.5	7.5	5	12.5
Ordinary members of the community	5	5	-	7.5	10	5	7.5	12.5
Inspectors of Schools	12.5	-	7.5	2.5	5	12.5	20	5
Curriculum Specialists	5	5	-	10	10	-	12.5	25

Since the above list was pre-selected, the respondents were asked to list other people they would include in the committees. The following table is a list of people they chose presented according to the frequency the names of the groups were mentioned.

Table 4.25 clearly indicate the preferences parents made. They were cognizant of the importance of including community leader in the school committees. The latter help in drumming up local support.

TABLE 4.24

PARENTS PREFERENCE OF GROUPS TO WORK WITH

	RATING	
Heads of Schools	1	(High)
Teachers	2	
Local Politicians	3	
Religious Leaders	4	
Inspectors of Schools	5	
Students	6	
Ordinary members of the community	7	
Curriculum Specialists	8	(Low)

The above findings, once again the support the notion of parental participation in school affairs. Contrary to what other people have been saying, the parents themselves have affirmed their interest in secondary education. To deny them the right of participation would be to deny them of the opportunity to support their children.

The researcher was interested to find out the reasons the respondents chose the groups of people listed in table 4.24 in the curriculum related committees.

The reasons for choosing heads of schools in the committee were that, as school administrators, they were conversant with the school curriculum and they ensured

TABLE 4.25

OTHER GROUPS OF PEOPLE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS WOULD INCLUDE IN THE COMMITTEES

	FREQUENCY
Parents and guardians	5
Chiefs	3
Village headmen	3
Members of Parliament	2
Ward Councillor	2
Government Officials	2
Businessmen	2
Retired Civil Servants	1
Red Cross Society Officials	1
Members of Parent-Teacher Association	1
Malawi Young Pioneer Officials	1
School Career Counselors	1
Members of the School Committee	1

effective learning to take place in the school. As for teachers, most respondents were aware of the important role teachers play in bringing about student learning. They also stated that teachers were knowledgeable about educational issues, therefore, they would be in a better position to change the curriculum. It was also stated that since teachers are involved in teaching, they were aware of students needs and problems and as such, they would be in a better position to plan a better curriculum.

The third on the list were local politicians. They were chosen because they were concerned with the development of

the school and could help in deciding what type of political content to add in the curriculum. However, not all the reasons given were positive. Some respondents stated that local politicians know very little about education and so, they can contribute very little to curriculum and instructional issues.

Religious leaders were chosen because they would assist in planning the spiritual and moral content of the curriculum. They were also seen as honest, understanding and dedicated to their work. These qualities would contribute to the smooth running of the committee. One respondent, however, stated that religion was not relevant to curriculum planning.

The respondents were positive about the inclusion of Inspectors of schools. They stated that inspectors of schools would guide the committee in its deliberation. Their knowledge about problems teachers face would help in suggesting solutions to instructional problems. Related to this, the respondents stated that they would be in a position to determine whether poor quality in education is attributed to poor teaching or content difficulty. Another positive aspect of having them in the committees, was that they were in direct contact with teachers, student, heads of schools and administrators at the Ministry. This position would enhance the implementation of decisions taken at the committee meetings. But a few respondents saw

inspectors as self-centered and, therefore, not in a position to take views from parents seriously.

Students were not a favorite choice (Table 4.24). The respondents who gave reasons for not including them on the committees stated that they were immature and their curriculum choices would not be in line with government policy and reflect the knowledge and skills demanded by the job market. But still, some respondents felt that they had a right to be included in the curriculum planning committee because they were in the majority as far as the school was concerned. Also, hearing views from those directly affected by curriculums choices would contribute a lot to curriculum decision making.

Ordinary members of the community were preferred by some of the respondents because they would select content which would reflect the culture of the community. But the majority of the respondents felt they would not contribute much to curriculum planning because they did not know much about secondary education and curriculum development.

Surprisingly, curriculum specialists had a low rating (Table 4.24). The main reasons for this was that most respondents thought that curriculum specialists would work better with fellow specialists. Working with laymen would result in communication problems. Nevertheless, a few saw in curriculum specialists experience in matters concerning curriculum and instruction. In addition, they stated that

their participation would help them to understand some of the practical issues to be considered when planning the curriculum, from other members of the committee.

When asked if involving parents and guardians like them in curriculum planning and decision making would improve the secondary school program, 68% agreed. There would be improvement in the secondary school program because parents know many problems faced by their children. Their contribution to curriculum planning would therefore be profound. The fact that parents would know the kinds of decisions made in the school, this would also lead to cooperation between teachers and parents. They also stated that most of the problems which are not attended to by the school authorities, would be looked into.

As for the 32% who said that parental involvement would not improve curriculum decision making in the school, they said that some parents do not have sufficient educational background to contribute much to the curriculum process. In addition, they also stated that their contribution may be contrary to scientific beliefs. This remark lends support to the argument about the divergence between traditional and western scientific beliefs discussed earlier in the study.

In order to get as much information as possible from the respondents, they were asked to make general comments about secondary education. The respondents commented on

curriculum and instruction, student welfare, discipline, school finances and communication.

On curriculum issues they reiterated the importance of teaching relevant content and skills to students to enable them to become useful in the rural environment for which most of them would return after school. They wanted the curriculum to emphasize practical subjects like Wood Work, Home Economics and Agriculture. In order to preserve the country's cultural heritage, they wanted cultural dances and folk role to be taught in schools. They also noted that the curriculum was 'over loaded', and they thought that this situation does not bring about effective learning. From the point of teaching, they observed, rightly, that there was a lot of 'spoon feeding' in the schools. This practice, they observed, lowers educational standards. Some of the respondents recommended that the school should offer a lot inquiry based learning activities. They also remarked on the shortage of teachers in the schools especially in mathematics and science subjects.

On student welfare they wanted the Ministry to improve school meals and hostel accommodation. The latter was specially said about those school that run boarding facilities not supported by the Ministry. Discipline issue was raised again by some of the respondents. The general observation was that secondary schools students are not

well disciplined. Most parents wanted the school to enforce discipline among both students and teachers in order to promote effective learning. Some parents, however, were not happy with the way discipline cases were handled by some schools. They complained that in certain cases offenders and their parents should be warned three times before the student is expelled from school.

On financial matters, some respondents noted that school and boarding fees rates were quite high for the average Malawian family. They wanted to seem more needy students receiving financial aid from the government. They also felt that school uniform and other school materials should be provided free by the government.

It was observed in this study that the average distance between home and school was 109 kms. Most parents wanted students to be sent to schools nearest their homes to enable parents to have contacts with school personnel and cut down the cost of transportation. In order for this to happen, they recommended that the government build more secondary schools in the rural areas where most students live.

Access to secondary education and, thereafter, to the university is a major concern issue for many if not all parents with school-going children. That this issue was raised by some of the respondents is not surprising. Those who raised this issue, wanted to see more secondary built

in the country in order to solve the secondary school bottle neck problem. With regard to university admission, some respondents observed that in some day schools, students do not score high points to enable them to be selected to the university. They wondered, ironically, if students from these day schools were not intelligent enough to qualify for university admission.

One of the reasons for poor achievement in some day secondary schools was because of unequal distribution of materials and staff between day schools and boarding schools, and the fact that the home environments of some 'day scholars' are not conducive to learning. To prove this point, today, some of the schools which were upgraded to full boarding status and equipped with ample learning facilities and staff, are performing well and, sometimes, even better than the traditional boarding schools in the country.

Parents and guardians, therefore, wanted the government to make sure that there was proportional distribution of educational resources to secondary schools. Others wanted to see an improvement in the way students are selected to secondary schools.

On a positive note, some respondents made positive remarks about secondary education in the country. They stated that compared to a decade or so ago, educational standards were high and that the Ministry was trying its

best to improve school meals and accommodation in the schools. They also value secondary education highly because, in the words of one respondent..."it brightens boys and girls and prepare them for the future by equipping them with new knowledge and skills."

Teachers' Perceptions of Secondary School Curriculum Decision Making Process

Teachers are key to the success of any educational program and, as such, they have a right to participate in educational decision making process. One way of determining to what extent a system is centralized, is to assess teachers' participation in decision making. In this study, a representative sample of secondary teachers in Malawi was drawn in order to verify the assumption that the educational system in the country, particularly the curriculum decision making process is centralized. But before the findings are presented, a brief description of the respondents is warranted.

Of the thirty-eight teachers (42%) who responded to this study 79% were male and 21% were female. Seventy-one percent were between the ages of 26 and 35, 18% between 36 and 45, and 8% between 46 and 55. Only one teacher was below the age of 25 and none above the age of 55. With the exception of one individual who had a Diploma in Technical Education, thirty-nine percent (14) of the respondents had a Diploma in Education. Forty-two percent were degree

holders. Eighty-seven percent (13) of this group had a Bachelor of Education degree, while 13% (5) were in possession of a general degree. However, three of these general degree holders had a University Certificate of Education. Only one teacher had an M. Ed. degree. Three of the respondents had primary school teacher training certificates (T2). In terms of experience, 61% of the respondents had a teaching experience of over three years. Of this, 43% had over 10 years of teaching experience.

The length of service at one school matters a lot in teaching. It has been argued that the longer one stays at one school, the more he or she is able to know more about his/her students and the teaching/learning environment. But others, while agreeing with this assertion, have pointed out that there is a critical point, in terms of years one spends at a school, that marks the limit of one's effectiveness. In other words, beyond a certain number of years a teaching at a school, a teacher can become complacent, unmotivated and hence ineffective.

Apart form teaching, teachers play other roles in the school. Literature on teacher effectiveness, says that some of these roles have a negative effect on the teacher's major responsibility of ensuring that students learn and succeed in class. However, not all roles are distracting, but rather, they are part of the teacher's repertoire of

activities in the school that create optimum conditions for learning.

The table below summarizes the various responsibilities of the respondents. These responsibilities were categorozed into four broad areas, namely: curriculum and instruction, Administration, Student welfare and extra curricular activities.

TABLE 4.26

VARIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS

RESPONSIBILITY	FREQUENCY	RESPONSIBILITY	FREQUENCY
Club/Society Patron	18	Dispensary Officer	1
Form Teacher	14	Examination Officer	1
Head of Department	8	Entertainment Officer	1
House Master/Mistress	8	Unit Leader of the President's Award Scheme	1
Sports Coach/Director	5	Head of Night School	1
Deputy Head	4	ATEM Regional Vice-Chairperson	1
Boarding Master/Mistress	4	Safety Officer	1
General Duties	3	Time Tabling Officer	1
Career Counsellor	3	No responsibility	1
Discipline Committee Member	2		
Quiz Organizer	2		
Prep Supervisor	2		

This was done to try to determine which activities were, strictly speaking, not related to classroom teaching, and those which were related to teaching (Table 4.27).

TABLE 4.27

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES CATEGORIZED INTO TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING DUTIES

RESPONSIBILITIES	FREQUENCY
Extra-Curricular	31
Administration	25
Curriculum and Instruction	18
Student Welfare	7
No Responsibility	1

An analysis of the above table shows that, with the exception of responsibility of students' welfare, curriculum and instructional related responsibilities were performed by fewer teachers. Extra-curricular activities and administrative chores which according to the table had very little bearing with classroom teaching, seems to have occupied much of their "non-teaching" time.

In order to probe into issue of participation in curriculum decision making, teachers were asked if they were involved in curriculum decision making. Sixty percent of the respondents stated that they were involved. Twenty-nine of those who agreed, said that they were involved at classroom level, 53% at school level and 13% at national level.

The issues teachers were involved in at classroom level were: syllabus interpretation and lesson preparation, student evaluation, deciding about topics which needed serious study by the students since the syllabus was long, and advising students on how to succeed in their academic

programs. As for those teachers who were involved in curriculum decision making at school level, the following statements summarize the kind of decisions they were involved in.

TABLE 4.28

CURRICULUM DECISION MAKING ISSUES TEACHERS WERE INVOLVED IN AT SCHOOL LEVEL.

Deciding ways and means of teaching subjects.
Deciding which subjects teachers should teach.
Making decisions about ordering of books
Arranging optional subjects students should take.
Streaming students according to ability.
Organizing departmental meetings and setting the agenda for discussion.
Helping the head of school in making decisions about the curriculum.

As noted above, very few teachers were involved in curriculum decision making. Those who were involved in deliberating issues at syllabus committee meetings were deciding ways and means of improving subject content and methodology, reviewing the syllabus, and helping to prepare subject content and instructional materials.

When the respondents were asked if they thought they were fully involved in curriculum decision making, 82% did not think they were. The reason for this state of affairs was that, as far as curriculum decision making was concerned, there was only room for suggestions; decisions were made by responsible authorities at the Ministry of

Education and Culture. Some respondents, noted that although schools were given some powers to make instructional related decisions following the Ministry's guidelines, heads of schools and their deputies monopolised the decision making process, and in most cases, they acted to please the Ministry. Some respondents were apathetic in their responses. There stated that probably there were too many people involved already in curriculum decision making, while others said that they had little experience and low qualifications. One wonders how they would have gained the experience from, when the very opportunity for gaining that experience was denied of them.

The reasons cited above, prove that the majority of the teachers are not involved in decision making. When a more direct question was asked whether curriculum decision making was centralized or not, 82% said that it was centralized.

In a situation like this, there must surely be ways in which the majority of teachers who do not participate in decision making, influence some of the decisions made. When the respondents were asked how they influence decisions made on the curriculum, some mixed results were obtained. Some said that they contributed by voicing their views on some matters by answering questionnaires sent to them by the Inspectorate, through seminars organized by the Ministry, during discussions with the inspectors when they

visit the schools and during standardization meetings at the Malawi National Examination Board. However, some teachers complained that although they contribute through these forums, their views are not taken seriously. As a result, they do not comment much about the curriculum. Others said that they were indifferent and just carry out Ministry's decisions.

When the teachers were asked if during the past two years there had been any changes that addresses their concerns, 26% agreed. When further asked if they felt that there were responsible for bringing about such changes, only 11% thought they were responsible. Regarding changes they had agreed with despite their not participating in the decision making process, 37% of the respondents had agreed with the changes. These changes, they recalled, were to do with the removing of topics from the syllabus which were irrelevant to the situation in Malawi and the inclusion of more relevant topics. Some syllabi like Biology had their topics sequenced. The content of some syllabi were also trimmed. For example, in literature, there was a reduction of the number of literature books from 5 to 3. Some of the changes, however, were examination oriented. Some respondents, for example mentioned of the introduction of objective type questions in MSCE History examination and the introduction of short essay questions in MSCE Biology.

One of the respondents said that in order to ensure effective curriculum decisions and their implementation, the community had to be involved. The study wanted to find out if teachers perceived parental and community participation positively. Sixty-three percent of the respondents stated that parental and community participation in the affairs of the school had positive effects, where as only 11% said that it was counter productive. Twenty-six percent said that parental participation did not make any difference to the effectiveness of the school.

The respondents who were positive about parental participation said that educating the youth was not their own responsibility, but that of parents and the community as well. They observed that, parents understand the problems faced by their children, and as a result, problems faced by students are minimized. In addition, when teachers work hand in hand with parents, student pay more attention to school work and it boosts their morale. Through community-school collaboration, one respondent observed that students are able to link what they learn in school with every day community life experiences.

As to those who saw parental participation in negative terms, said that they are ignorant about the kind of activities taking place at the school, and so their contribution is not productive. Some parents, it was observed, undermine the authority of school staff and

introduce bad behavior in the school. Other respondents said that their participation does not really promote learning because they are more concerned with discipline in schools.

When a more specific question was addressed to teachers about parental and community involvement in school activities, 45% percent said they were involved. The researcher was interested in finding out whether the activities were related to curriculum and instruction. Nearly all the activities were not directly related to learning as the table below shows.

Although these activities were not directly related to classroom teaching and learning, they still have a positive impact on the school and go towards creating an environment conducive to learning. In addition, the other roles played

TABLE 4.29

TYPE OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE WERE INVOLVED IN

Involved in boarding committee activities	9
Involved in self-help activities like molding bricks for self help activities	6
Member of the school committee	3
Organizing open day activities	3
Enforcing school discipline	1
Helping in organizing traditional dances	1
Assisting in running clubs and societies	1

by parents have a positive on learning because they tend to relieve some of their responsibilities.

One of the effective ways of stimulating interest on the part of the parents is by informing parents and guardians about the progress of their children and other school activities. When teachers were asked if apart from sending report cards, they were other means of communicating to parents and guardians about the progress of their children and dependents, 52% said there were. They mentioned telephone calls for those parents who had telephones in their homes, face to face meetings with parents, writing letters and through open day shows.

One of the problems faced by centralized systems is poor communication between the schools and the central office. The respondents were asked what channels of communication they use when addressing issues at the Ministry of Education and Culture headquarters. The following table summarizes the type of channels used in order of frequency.

TABLE 4.30

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION USED BY TEACHERS WHEN ADDRESSING ISSUES AT THE MINISTRY

	FREQUENCY
Through Heads of Schools	14
During Seminars and Meetings	10
Through Subject Inspectors	7
By writing letters to the Ministry	7
At Syllabus Committee meetings	2
By writing letters to the Ministry through the Headmaster	2
By calling the Ministry	1
By visiting Ministry headquarters	1

Forty-six percent of the respondents said that the communication channels used were effective.

In order to ensure that the communication channels were open so that their views and opinions were heard, the respondents offered the following suggestions (Table 4.31).

Inspectors of schools play an important role in instruction and learning. The respondents were asked if they agreed with this assertion. Forty-four percent of the respondents agreed. The reasons for agreeing were many. Table 4.32, lists the most significant reasons.

TABLE 4.31

WAYS OF IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOLS AND THE MINISTRY.

The education system should be decentralized, and more powers should be delegated to regional educational offices which would be more accessible to teachers.
Subject inspectors should improve their linkage roles between the school and the Ministry.
The number of subject inspectors should be increased.
The reporting line between the schools and the Ministry should be shortened.
Holding of subject seminars for each subject at least once a year.
Curriculum specialists should make field visits to discuss curriculum issues with teachers.

TABLE 4.32

IMPORTANCE OF INSPECTORS IN THE SCHOOLS

They advise teachers on how to handle certain topics.
They see to it that teachers adhere to the syllabus.
Were it not for the inspectors, teacher would not adhere to their schemes of work.
They improve the quality of teaching.
They boost teachers' professional growth.
They help in orientating beginning teachers.
Inspectors' recommendations act as a base for important decisions within the educational system

Some teachers, however, did not think that inspectors play an important role in schools. The main reason for this was that they rarely visited schools and, therefore, what ever happened in class had nothing to do with them. Another reason was that they are obsessed with finding faults than giving constructive ideas to teachers to improve their teaching. Others said that although they offer advice to teachers some of their advice is not practical and therefore not applicable to their teaching/learning situations.

The effectiveness of the inspector is indeed judged by the number of visits he/she makes to a school in a given year. When an inquiry was made regarding the number of times the respondents were supervised during the past year, 45% of the teachers were not inspected, 48% were inspected once, and 5% twice. Only one respondent claimed that he had been visited four times.

Another factor that enhances the effectiveness of the inspector, is the maintenance of a good working relationship with teachers. Eleven percent of the respondents said that the relationship, was very good, 47% said it was good while 24% said it was satisfactory. Only 5% said it was poor. There was a 13% non-respondent rate on this question. Regarding what role they saw inspectors of schools playing, 5% saw it as supervisory and 26% as fault finding. Fifty-nine percent perceived it as both supervisory and fault finding. A 13% non-respondent rate was registered on this question.

Although this study is advocating teacher participation in curriculum decision making, one of the factors conducing to participation in all the various activities of the school is interest. To find out about teachers' interest in the various school activities, the respondents were given a pre-selected list of committee to rate according to their preferences. The following table, summarizes their preferences.

The respondents preferred to be involved in the curriculum planning committee and the subject syllabus committee. The teachers were further asked reasons for wanting to be involved in the committees chosen. The most

TABLE 4.33

TEACHERS' PREFERENCES ON SCHOOL COMMITTEES THEY WANTED TO BE INVOLVED IN.

NAME OF COMMITTEE	RATING IN PERCENTAGES High----------->Low			
	1	2	3	4
Curriculum Planning Committee	51	20	8	20
Subject Syllabus Committee	40	37	20	-
Boarding and Students' Welfare Committee	8.5	17	20	37
Disciplinary Committee	5.7	14	34	34

Non-respondent rate on item = 7.8%.

significant reasons for serving on the curriculum related committees were that they wanted to help in the selection of content which relevant to the country's needs as well the local school environment. They also wanted to assist in sequencing of topics in order to have a curriculum which was learnable and less repetitive. Most teachers saw themselves as being placed in an ideal position to do this because they felt that they were close to the learners. Their knowledge about students capabilities would help in planning and selecting appropriate curriculum materials. They also valued the work of these two committee because they were central to student learning.

For those who chose the boarding committee, the reasons offered were related to student learning. For example, they stated that they wanted to improve living conditions at the hostels because poor boarding conditions

had a negative efects on learning. Others felt that by being involved in students' welfare activities, they would know their students better. A few had negative comments about this committee. They said that it was too demanding, and it was not necessary for teachers to be involved since there was already a Boarding master in the school.

The least favored committee was the disciplinary committee. The respondents stated that working in this committee would be frustrating because decisions made by this committee are usually undermined by heads of schools. In other words, the committee is denied the powers to operate independently. However, some positive remarks were said about the disciplinary committee. For example, some teachers felt that discipline was important to the learning process. Participating in this committee was seen, therefore, as one way of promoting conditions for effective learning in the school.

The kind of people one works with matters a lot in any shared decision making process. Although it is recommended that schools should include various groups of people in the community in order to base decisions on a diversity of opinions, it is sometimes helpful to first to find out the preferences of the participants. The purpose for this, is not necessarily to exclude the groups of people not preferred in the committee, but rather, once the preferences and reasons for wanting not to work with

certain groups of people are known, those involved in organizing the committees may work on such group dynamic factors which are, for most part, attitudinal.

The teachers were, therefore, asked which groups of people they would like to work with in the curriculum planning and subject syllabus committees. The following table shows their preferences. An analysis of the table indicates that teachers preferred working with fellow teachers. The next group they preferred working with were their heads of schools. The least preferred group were local politicians. Table 4.34 illustrates their preferences clearly.

TABLE 4.34

TEACHERS PREFERENCES OF PEOPLE THEY WANTED TO WORK WITH IN THE CURRICULUM RELATED COMMITTEES

	Rating in Percentages High----------->Low					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Local Politicians	2.8	-	5.7	14.2	8.5	64.5
Heads of Schools	25.7	48.6	5.7	5.7	57	-
Fellow Teachers	54.2	22.9	11.4	-	2.8	2.8
Students	5.7	5.7	5.7	31.4	8.6	20
Religious Leaders	-	5.7	5.7	5.7	31.4	8.6
Ordinary Members of the Community	2.8	8.6	2.8	17.1	17.1	11.2
Inspectors of Schools	17.1	11.2	31.4	5	8.6	8.6

TABLE 4.35

TEACHERS' RATING OF GROUPS OF PEOPLE THEY PREFERRED WORKING WITH IN THE COMMITTEES

	Rating
Teachers	1 (High)
Heads of Schools	2
Inspectors of Schools	3
Students	4
Religious Leaders	5
Ordinary members of the community	6
Local politicians	7 (Low)

The respondents were asked the reasons for preferring and not preferring to work with the above groups of people. The reasons for preferring to work with teachers were mainly related to their knowledge of the subjects offered in the curriculum and their understanding of the students' learning environment and the problems they encounter in class. Teachers' knowledge about students' learning problems, would help in deciding the difficulty level of content. Others stated that the fact that they are close to the learner, they have a right to be in the committee.

Teachers chose heads of schools are their second choice mainly because they had a wide experience in secondary school teaching and so, they would offer better suggestions. In addition, they were in a better position as administrators to co-ordinate curriculum activities.

Inspectors of schools were preferred because they were subject experts and so they would help in deciding what should be taught in schools. They were also chosen because

they would facilitate communication among schools and between schools and the Ministry. There was, however, a negative comment about them. A few respondents pointed out the fact that they had difficulties appreciating their role since the seldom visited schools.

Some teachers preferred having students on the committee because they would benefit a lot from being involved in curriculum planning and the fact that it was important to give students a say in the curriculum. However, most of the respondents did not share these sentiments. They stated that students were inexperienced and do not know what is good for them. Their immaturity needed guidance in most things and, therefore, they were not worth having on the committees.

Although religious leaders were rated fifth, a few of the teachers who preferred working with them, said some positive things about them. They stated that they would help to clarify moral content in the curriculum and since they have a common understanding with the community they serve, they would be in a better position to clarify the needs of the community. Other respondents, however, thought negatively about their role in curriculum planning process. They said that they are often very unscientific in their ways of working and that they feared they would bring religious ideologies in the curriculum.

Ordinary members of the community were generally not preferred by the teachers. The respondents did not give many reasons why they would not prefer working with them. The only significant reason was that they did not know much about the curriculum. In contrast, some good reasons were given by the few teachers who rated them highly. They said that they would offer better suggestions about the curriculum because they knew the country's needs better and would contribute to the cultural content of the curriculum. They would also contribute to a better understanding of the students. In addition, some respondents stated that, as parents, they had a right to participate in the decision making process.

Local politicians were least preferred by most of the teachers. The respondents stated that local politicians are difficult to work with; they are untrustworthy, and dogmatic. They are also stated that local politicians were not keen in the professional aspect of curriculum development. In addition, they stated when involved, sometimes they become obstacles to rational curriculum planning. A few respondents, nevertheless, saw some advantages in having them as committee members. They said that they can help in interpreting community's needs and this would result in a curriculum that reflected the needs and aspirations of the people.

When teachers were asked to comment on factors affecting secondary education in the country, a number of

issues came up. They were mainly to do with the curriculum and delivery system, classroom management, administration, discipline, and teacher motivation.

Most of what the respondents said about the curriculum has already been presented above. But the main thrust of their comments was that the lack of participation by teachers in curriculum decision making and the system's insensitivity over teachers' opinions about the curriculum, affected the quality of the content of the curriculum and the way it was taught. Inadequate curriculum materials, teaching aids and apparatus affected teaching and student learning. Classroom management factors which affected the quality of secondary education were the large classes and inadequate space, and lack of facilities like desks and chairs. Low teacher qualifications affected the quality of teaching because they did not understand fully some of the topics they were expected to teach. In addition, they lacked the knowledge about effective teaching strategies. In cases where teachers knew about such strategies, they were poorly applied in class.

Another cause for poor teacher performance was the fact that due to shortage of staff in other subjects, teachers were asked to teach classes which they did not qualify to teach. It was recommended that there was need for the Ministry to organize seminars from time to time to discuss curriculum issues and familiarize teachers with new

topics and keeping them abreast with new teaching methods. Another remedy to this problem was for the Ministry to ensure that the University's output of teachers was in line with national teacher requirements. In order for teachers to develop effective ways of teaching certain topics, it was suggested that teachers should be given a chance to conduct classroom-based research. Some respondents said that the standard of English among some teachers was very bad and it affected their teaching. This issue was also raised by students. Again, this an issue that lands squarely on those who prepare teachers. As a teacher educator, the researcher is of the opinion that when students leave secondary school, their English is not yet proficient. There is, therefore, the need to increase the duration of the English course which is offered to first year student teachers at Chancellor College.

Administrative factors were also cited as affecting the quality of secondary education in the country. The highly centralized nature of the system prevented teachers from being innovative in solving some of the problems they faced in class. It also made heads of schools rigid in their approach. In addition, it delayed the procurement of curriculum materials and equipment and requests for the maintenance of school buildings. The latter had an effect on the school environment and ultimately on learning. The transfer of teachers during the term was seen as another

factor affecting student learning, and in relation to this factor, they observed that the distribution of teachers in the schools was not rational and this resulted in unnecessary shortages of staff in other schools.

Discipline came up again as an issue affecting learning in secondary schools. The teachers reiterated the same reasons that have already been cited above. The morale of teachers was a factor which many respondents mentioned. Lack of monetary incentives for teachers was seen as a major reason for teachers' lack of motivation to teach effectively. As expected, they recommended that the Ministry should offer incentives to teachers by promoting them within the classroom.

Perceptions of Heads of Schools of Secondary School Curriculum Decision Making Process

As administrators, heads of schools play a vital role in the implementation of school programs. The success of any school programs, is to a large extent, dependent upon the leadership qualities and managerial competence of heads of schools.

In this study, 30 questionnaires were mailed to a randomly selected sample of heads of secondary schools in Malawi. Out of the 88% who responded, about 12% were female. Seventy seven percent of the respondents were below 45 years of age, 8% between 46 and 55 and 4% over 55. There was a non-respondent rate of 11% to this item.

Eighty-one percent of the respondents were graduates. Most of them had either a Bachelor of Education degree or General degree with a University Certificate in Education. Out of this group, 29% percent had a Master's degree. Nineteen percent of the respondents had a University Diploma; two with a Diploma in Education, another two with a Diploma in Agriculture, and one with a Diploma in Technical Education. Apart from their academic qualifications, 42% percent had undergone administrative and management training. When asked how they got this professional training, of the ten (38%) who responded to this item, seven (70%) stated that they got it by attending workshops and seminars and only three (30%) said that they got it by attending a college/university. The professional qualifications of the respondents can be generally rated as adequate. The only exception is the presence of Diploma holders within the administrative structure.

Experience is an important factor when one assesses the effectiveness of administrators. With experience, administrators have a handle on routine administrative tasks so that more of their time is left for instructional and supervisory related problems. Their effectiveness is also enhanced by the fact that as they become more experienced on the job, they are able to effectively use personal channels of communications with the central office. This cuts down the delays which are typical with

official bureaucratic lines of communication. The study was, therefore, interested in the number of years that the respondents had headed a secondary school (Table 4.36).

Twenty-seven percent of the respondents had headed their present schools for under a year, 42% between 2 and 3 years and 15% between 3 and 4 years. One had headed a school for 10 years!

The above background information shows that the majority of the heads of schools involved in this study, were qualified for heading secondary schools and had sufficient experience on the job.

The respondents were asked at what levels they participated in curriculum planning and decision making. Eighty-eight percent stated that they participated at school level, 50% at classroom level and only 11% participated at national level. The low participation at national level shows that the system is highly centralized. The reason why about half of the respondents participate in decision making at classroom level is that at this level, usually heads of departments and teachers are active participants. Heads of schools come into the picture when departmental issues are discussed at school level during staff meetings. When asked which level(s) they believed would benefit the school most, 46% stated "national level", 50% "school level" and 27% stated "classroom level". The fact that most of the heads of schools stated that their

TABLE 4.36

THE NUMBER OF YEARS HEADS OF SCHOOL HAD HEADED THE PRESENT SCHOOL

NO. OF YEARS	HEADS OF SCHOOLS No.	%
1	4.	15.4
2	2	7.7
3	2	7.7
4	3	11.5
5	1	3.9
6	2	7.7
7	1	3.9
8	1	3.9
11	1	3.9
13	1	3.9
Less than a year	2	7.7
Acting in temporary capacity	1	3.9
New appointment	1	3.9
TOTAL	22	85

Non-respondent rate for item = 15%

schools would benefit most if they participated at national level is not surprising because this means that they would at least use this opportunity to inform decision makers at the Ministry curriculum related problems their schools faced. In most centralized institutions access to decision making circles at the top can bring fruitful benefits to those running institutions at the periphery. This, most of the heads of schools are aware of.

Heads of schools are members of various school and community related committees. When asked to mention which

committees they were members of, they came up with quite a long list (Table 4.37).

When the table below is analyzed from a curriculum planning perspective, only three heads of schools mentioned, were involved in committees that discuss curriculum issues at national level, namely: the JC Bible Knowledge Committee, the MSCE Physical Science Committee, and the Association for the Teaching of English in Malawi. These individuals were appointed members of these committees not by virtue of being heads of school, but rather as competent subject specialists in Bible Knowledge, Physical Science and English.

TABLE 4.37

COMMITTEES WHICH HEADS OF SCHOOLS WERE MEMBERS

	No.	%
Boarding Committee	11	42.0
District Development Committee	3	11.5
Board of Governors	3	11.5
Discipline Committee	2	7.9
Parents-Teachers Committee	2	7.9
Town Planning Committee	2	7.9
Junior Certificate (JC) Syllabus Committee	1	3.9
Malawi School Certificate (MSCE) Physical Science committee	1	3.9
School Examination Committee	1	3.9
English Club Committee	1	3.9
Association for the Teaching of English in Malawi (ATEM) Committee	1	3.9
School Committee	1	3.9

Being members of several other committees is advantageous from a purely administrative point of view. The Boarding Committee, for example, is a crucial committee because it deals with the welfare of the student population. In fact nearly all heads of full and limited boarding schools are members of this committee. The fact that only 42% stated that they were members of this committee can only be explained as an oversight on the part of the respondents who did not put down this committee. Being a member of a parents-teachers' committee or school committee is important even from a curriculum point of view because in these committees members discuss problems and issues concerning students. The committees also act as channels of communication between parents and the general public at large and school staff.

Heads of schools do not make curriculum and instructional related decisions alone. In fact, an effective administrator takes advantage of the human resources around him/her when making formulating and implementing decisions. This can be done in various ways, for example, through group decision making or delegation The respondents were therefore asked to mention people who assist them in curriculum and instructional related activities in the school. The table below summarizes their responses. As shown in the table, the most frequently mentioned groups were the Heads of Department and teachers.

The Deputy head of the school was third on the list. The other groups of people mentioned were from the school with the exception of Examination Officers at the Malawi National Examination Board and the Ministry of Education and Culture staff. This is significant because it shows that despite the fact most of the curriculum issues are decided at the Ministry headquarters, the curriculum

TABLE 4.38

A LIST OF PEOPLE WHO ASSIST THE HEADS OF SCHOOL IN CURRICULUM DECISIONS

	No.	%
Teachers	15	57.7
Heads of Departments	12	46
Deputy Head	8	30.8
Examination Officers at MANEB	1	3.9
The Ministry of Education and Culture	1	3.9
Senior Staff	1	3.9
Subject Heads	1	3.9
Time Table Committee	1	3.9

activities that the various schools undertake to implement the curriculum are in the main referred at school level. This seems to argue the case for decentralized decision making strategy advanced in this study; a strategy which leaves a wide latitude of choices for implementing the curriculum in the hands of the school leaving the Ministry headquarters to deal with the larger issues of formulating

and developing goals and core content of the curriculum system-wide. In fact, when the respondents were asked which administrative set up they would favor, 77% percent mentioned decentralized administration.

The respondents were asked if during the past year they initiated curriculum and instructional changes for the school. Sixty-nine percent did not initiate any changes at all and only 15% did initiate some changes. Twelve percent did not respond to the item. When asked further whether they initiated decisions for the whole secondary school system, 73% said they did not. Twenty-seven percent did not respond to the question. This evidence also supports that curriculum decision making process in secondary schools is centralized.

The respondents were asked if during the past two years, there had been any changes in the curriculum that addressed some of their concerns. Only 35% stated that the changes addressed their concerns. In order to probe whether they participated to these changes or not, the respondents were asked if they contributed in bringing about such changes. Only nineteen percent said that they felt they contributed to such changes. When asked if they were in agreement with the changes, 46% agreed. The following is a list of changes that the respondents remembered off hand (Table 4.39).

Parental participation in the activities of the school depend to a large degree on the maintenance of good communication between the school and the home. The most regular means of communication between the school and the parents have been the end of term report cards which schools send informing parents of the progress of their children. The respondents were however asked which other means of communication they maintained with parents and

TABLE 4.39

A LIST OF CHANGES IN THE CURRICULUM THAT HEADS OF SCHOOL REMEMBERED TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS

Re-introduction of Physics and Chemistry as separate subjects
The dropping of certain outdated or irrelevant topics
The introduction of new topics
Introduction of new topics in the MSCE geography projects
Emphasis on written work rather than recall exercises at MSCE level
The making of some subjects like History as compulsory.
Changes concerning core subjects in the curriculum
Changes in set books in languages.

guardians. The following table shows a list of channels of communication used by the various schools.

The school administrators' attitude towards community participation in school activities was positive. Seventy-three percent agreed that parental participation has positive effects on school programs. Twelve percent, however, said that parental participation in school affairs

TABLE 4.40

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION WHICH HEADS OF SCHOOLS MAINTAINED WITH PARENTS

CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION	No.	%
Writing them letters informing them of educational issues.	15	57.7
Summoning parents for discussions	12	46
Sending circular letters once a term	4	15.3
Making telephone calls	6	23
Meeting with the school board which represents parents	2	7.7
Sending radio messages	1	3.9

Non-respondent rate on the item = 7.7%

the opinion that parental participation does not make any difference to the effectiveness of school.

The most used means of communication between the schools and the Ministry are usually through directives and circulars from the Ministry, letters, telephone calls, school visits by Inspectors and other Ministry officials, occasional visits by heads of schools to the ministry, and seminars/workshops organized by the Ministry during school vacations. The respondents were asked if they were satisfied with present communication channels with the ministry. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents stated that they were not satisfied.

In educational systems that use criterion referenced examinations for assessing student progress and for purposes of selecting students for further education, the

way subjects are taught in schools and the general orientation of the curriculum, is influenced by examination results. The general public's reaction to poor performance by students is usually to blame on the content in the curriculum and poor delivery of content. Teachers aware of this, tend to be selective in what content to emphasize during instruction. By analyzing the type of content that appears in examination papers over several years, they tend to put emphasis on those topics that are frequently tested. Students' also review past examination papers to see the pattern in which topics have appeared over a period of time, and focus their attention on selected "examinable content".

Educational officials and those responsible for curriculum development have sometimes taken poor examination results as a sign for initiating changes in the curriculum. Quite often, the basis for the change is based only on students' performance and not on a broader criteria such as the relevance of the content to the needs of the society and national development objectives.

With this background in mind, the study wanted to find out the respondents' opinion on the influence of examinations on the curriculum. Eighty-eight percent agreed that the examination system has a great influence on the way subjects are taught and on the curriculum.

In order to make sure that the curriculum is being implemented according to plan for the realization of national goals, the ministry monitors the activities of the schools. In Malawi, just like other countries, this is done through inspection. To find out how effective and efficient the inspectorate is, the respondents were asked how many times their schools had been visited by inspectors of schools. Forty-two percent of the schools had been visited once, 54% were not visited and only one school (4%) was visited twice during the academic year. This, of course, is not a good track record and raises doubts about the efficiency of the system.

Despite this, 74% of the respondents stated that inspectors of schools play an important role in instruction and school adminstration. The following were the reasons given (Table 4.41).

For the 19% who stated who saw inspectors as playing no important role said that they rarely visited schools, gave impractical comments and that, generally, their impact is not felt much by both teachers and students.

When asked what role they saw Inspectors playing, 73% said that they saw them playing the role of inspectors (implying fault finders) and supervisors and 11% saw them as playing the role of supervisors. Only one respondent (3.9%) saw them solely as fault finders. In general, the

relationship between inspectors and heads of schools was good. Nineteen percent said it was very good while 46%

TABLE 4.41

REASONS WHY INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN INSTRUCTION

REASONS FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF INSPECTORS	No.	%
They make valuable recommendations	5	19.2
They help correct some faults within the school	4	15.3
They help in school administration	4	15.3
They assist teachers in the classroom	3	11.5
They encourage both teachers and students	3	11.5
They check standards in the schools	2	7.7
Fear that work will be inspected helps staff at the school	2	7.7
They distribute information on topics	1	3.9
Schools need them	1	3.9
Help teachers to be up to date with changes in the curriculum and in methodology	1	3.9
Inform the school about availability of new books	1	3.9

Non-respondents rate for item = 7.7%

stated that it was good. Twenty-three percent put it as satisfactory but none saw the relationship as poor.

One respondent suggested that in order to promote the advisory role of inspectors, Heads of schools should invite Inspectors to discuss problems faced by the school. This visit should then be followed by the usual surprise inspection to check on the improvement made of the problems discussed. This would make the inspection targeted on particular issues and would solve the problem reported by teachers in this study in which inspectors criticized

teachers without appreciating problems they faced in the classroom. Sometimes inspectors criticize teachers' performance on issues that the Ministry is supposed to get the blame, like the lack of teaching aids which can affect lesson presentation.

The respondents were asked to choose between centralized and decentralized administration. Seventy-seven percent were in favor of decentralized school administration. The respondents mentioned that the number of secondary schools is increasing and therefore, there was no way in which the central office would effectively and efficiently handle issues and problems from these schools. Some Heads of schools who were far away from Ministry headquarters complained stated they were at a disadvantage because it takes a long time for the Ministry to respond to their requests or to problems. A decentralized educational system was the only answer to resolving these administrative problems and to ensure that the system was effective in handling administrative problems. A regionally based administration would speed up communication and involve more people in decision making. This would not only affect the quality of decisions made, but it would also affect the implementation of decisions at school level, the school administrators stated.

The Heads of schools were asked to list down issues affecting secondary education in Malawi. Many issues were

raised ranging from the student welfare to learning in the classroom. On boarding facilities, some respondents said that the quality boarding facilities at a school correlates positively with student learning. So, in order to improve performance in the schools, the Ministry should look into ways of improving boarding facilities in the schools.

The Ministry is aware of this problem but simply does not have sufficient funds to raise the quality of boarding facilities in the schools. Although boarding fees have been raised from time to time to meet the rising costs of food, the Ministry is careful not to raise the fees too high for the average student. Another solution which the Ministry envisaged a few years ago to solve this problem, was to increase the number of students commuting from home to school. This has proved difficult to implement because most students' homes are far away from school. It only work in urban areas like Blantyre and Lilongwe where children and dependents of city residents can afford to commute to school. The problem is indeed acute because there are situations where the student can neither commute from home nor secure a place at the boarding. This is the case in schools where there are limited boarding facilities. As a result, students end up renting rooms in the surrounding residential areas. Obviously, under these circumstances, the students cannot concentrate on their studies.

The other issue which they raised was the lack of teaching and learning materials in the schools, and the shortage of teachers especially in the sciences. These, indeed, are issues affecting learning in the classroom and as stated earlier, can determine how well students perform during examinations.

This issue becomes an equity issue when, as the respondents observed, there is unequal distribution of curriculum materials, equipment and teachers in the schools. So, instead of success affecting the general population of the students, those schools with poor facilities are affected most. Since certain schools draw their student population from one district, this has future implications about the opportunities of these students for further education and employment.

One respondents wanted those involved in secondary education to first reflect on what education is there for. To him:

> There is confusion between the terms instruction and education. Many students go to school to be instructed and not to receive an education which develops the whole human being: mind, body and soul. What do we do in our schools to develop will power? good manners? honesty? respect of elders, the poor, the disabled? Do we train the hearts of the youth? to love what is noble? to love one another, to forgive one another, and to share with others? What do we do to combat the selfishness within our hearts? etc.

Indeed, educators should reflect on these virtues so that when the issues of quality education are discussed, they must be seen beyond the test scores. When the researcher was reading respondent's remarks, he tried to find what the "we" was standing for. He came to the conclusion that it was standing for those who have been placed with the responsibility of educating the youth.

It is, however, the conviction of the researcher that education of the youth is the responsibility of all - teachers, administrators, parents, and the community at large. Some of the virtues of humanity mentioned in the above quotation cannot be met without the active participation of the parents and the community. Some of them need to be emphasized at an early age before the youth is admitted to secondary school. The study, reiterates once again, the need for parental participation in education. To quote the words of Ralph Tyler, "education is not a football match for the public to watch, it is a process requiring all to participate" (personal conversation, April 11, 1990).

The respondents also mentioned discipline, permanence of both teachers and administrators, and dedication of teachers to their work. The issue of discipline has already been raised by teachers, students and parents. At this juncture, the study can only reiterate that this is an important factor which should be looked into in schools

with close cooperation with parents and active involvement of the student population itself.

Most of the respondents agreed, with an assertion made earlier in this study, that the more years a teacher or a head of school stays at one school, his/her effectiveness effectiveness improves. The question of dedication of school staff to their work is very important if they are to discharge their responsibilities well. But as the study has revealed, this dedication is eroded because of the lack of incentives for teachers. Professionally, lack of autonomy in making decisions at the classroom level, seems to contribute to this apathy. As for Heads of schools, they also noted their own limitations in running the schools since they referred most decisions to the Ministry.

The findings above have demonstrated that Heads of schools do not participate actively in curriculum planning and decision making process. They have also presented testimony that teachers do not participate in decision making. Regarding parental participation in school affairs, an overwhelming majority of Heads of schools would like to see parents participate more in school activities in order to increase student learning.

Summary

Overall, this study has revealed that curriculum planning and decision making in secondary schools in Malawi is highly centralized. Many consequences of this

centralization process point to conditions in classrooms. Teachers have no autonomy to make decisions because deviation from teachers' guides is not taken lightly by the authorities. Students' performance is obviously affected by this rigid teaching environment. Finally, apart from looking at the issue of curriculum planning and decision making, the study has also brought forth a wealth of ideas for improving secondary education in Malawi.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This concluding chapter has four main objectives. First, it summarises the whole study. Second, it points out major implications of the study in the light of the findings and ideas from the body of literature reviewed. Third, it makes recommendations for curriculum decision making in Malawi. Finally, it offers some suggestions for further research.

Summary

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the curriculum planning and implementation decision making process in Malawi in order to find out the extent to which the system is centralized. A second purpose was to identify the role of students, parents, teachers and heads of schools in curriculum decision making. The final purpose of the study was to developm strategies for meaningful involvement of students, teachers parents and the community at large, in curriculum decision making.

The research procedures used in this study consisted of systematic document analysis and interviews with selected educators. In addition a survey of opinion of students, parents, teachers, and heads of schools was conducted using the questionnaire method. Random sampling was used to select participants from each group. This

was used to select participants from each group. This enabled the researcher to better generalize the findings of the survey for nation-wide consideration.

The findings of the study have, confirmed that curriculum planning and decision making is centralized. The study has, however, noted that the government has begun decentralizing most of the functions of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Regarding curriculum decision making, the study has found that curriculum planning and development processes for secondary education are not fully systematized, and that few people participate in deciding what to include in the curriculum. In other words, decision making is not broadly based.

At the school level, heads of schools and teachers stated that they have very little say about the curriculum. The implementation of the curriculum is, therefore, not flexible enough to allow the school, while meeting the requirements of the national curriculum, to relate subject content with the local environment, or differing academic needs of students.

Having noted that the curriculum planning and development process is centralized, the researcher was of the opinion that there was nothing really wrong with having a centrally developed and co-ordinated curriculum. In fact, a centrally planned and developed curriculum is an effective instrument for promoting national unity and

cohesiveness. A national curriculum ensures that all learners, regardless of ethnic origin and geographical location, have access to the same knowledge and skills. However, for a centralized curriculum to be effective, there must be some built-in flexibility which would allow schools to organize and modify the content in order to allow learners to draw practical experiences from the local environment. The local environment is a rich medium for instruction and learning; it allows the learner to concretise learning experiences in very powerful ways. Since it is almost impossible for content in a national curriculum to reflect all the diverse elements of the local environment, there is need, therefore, for this flexibility. One way of ensuring this is that teachers should have a say about the content of the curriculum since there are the ones closest to the learner. The study, therefore, proposes a curriculum planning, development strategy which, while it is centrally developed and coordinated give individual schools some curricular and instructional choice. This strategy is envisaged to work within a broader framework of school based management.

Implications

The findings of this study have implications for the curriculum planning and decision making process for secondary education in Malawi. Since curriculum planning

is just one component of the educational system, it is logical to first look at the overall implications of the study system-wide.

One of the specific objectives of the study was to find out the degree to which the system is centralized. Using Tilak's (1984) definition of centralized decision making, as one "where the process of planning takes place at central/national level," educational decision making in the country is highly centralized because decisions for running the systems many components from the Ministry Headquarters. The system has an elaborate but rather lengthy decision making hierarchy where matters pertaining to education in the country, are referred and decision made at higher levels of the decision making pyramid.
The work of Naik (1969) on criteria for judging the degree to which a system is decentralized helped to analyze the system's decision making structure. The criteria used by Naik is to analyze the flow of information and ideas up and down, and studying the authority and decision making structure of a system.

The study has revealed that the flow of information between the Ministry and the school is top-down. Teachers and heads of schools involved in this study said that they were not involved in the making of decisions about the curriculum. An analysis of the decision steps has also shown that the system is highly centralized. The system

has long decision making steps which affect the administration of the school, and the implementation of the curriculum. This finding, concurs with the one made by the Education Service Review (1988). The review observed that:

> In terms of organization, work in the Ministry is highly centralised with much of the decision making taking place at Headquarters, and at senior levels.....
> The decision making process is time consuming and lacks important elements of integration, since it relies on a process of referral up through the hierarchy (paragraphs 45 and 47).

The implication of this on the effectiveness and efficiency of the system is quite obvious. The delays due to the long reporting and decision lines, the inadequate horizontal and bottom-up information flow, denies the system of important information on which to base decisions for curriculum planning and development. The dearth of information about the curriculum and instructional technology as indicated by teachers and heads of school in this study, affects the implementation of the curriculum (McLaughlin and Marsh (1978) and Fullan (1981, 1982).

Also, this centralization has implications on the distribution of resources. Many of the teachers and heads of schools involved in this study were not satisfied with the present mechanism for acquiring curriculum materials and other facilities for the school. One of the problems noted was that most schools do not have authority to order

and purchase materials for the school. All requests are handled at the Ministry Headquarters. This results in delays in the acquisition of essential curriculum materials in schools.

The process of curriculum development, as has already been observed, is not comprehensive and systematic. The system has, however, an elaborate procedure for developing curriculum at subject level. The subject inspector, plays an important role in initiating curriculum and materials development activities. The subject syllabus committee, plays a key role in the review of the syllabuses and development of curriculum materials (Appendix B). The only problem is that it is not inclusive enough. If one were to put this process of curriculum development against models of curriculum development discussed earlier on, it would fit within the Tylerian model. The process is objective based and professional/technical in its approach.

Other scholars, have not questioned its efficacy as powerful guidelines for planning and developing curriculum, but rather, they question how curriculum decisions are arrived. The fact that many respondents in this study are questioning the basis for making some of the curriculum decisions, gives credence to the work of Schwab (1974); Apple (1979, 1983); Walker (1971); Freire (1970); Giroux (1981, 1983, 1987); Robinson, Ross and White, (1985); Wenstein and Fantini (1970), which advocate a political and

interactional framework for planning the curriculum. Essentially what the above scholars are advocating, is a decentralized curriculum decision making steps that guarantees the participation of the community, teachers, and students in curriculum decision making.

This can take place if the overall policy making strategies are also inclusive. When an analysis of the policy making strategies were made against theory on the subject, the researcher found that, they approximate to Dror's (1968) synoptic or scientific policy making strategy and quite far from the interactional strategy as espoused by Lindblom (1963, 1969). The implications of this is that, unless the overall policy making strategy is changed, one can except very little change in the way curriculum decisions are made.

Another criterion that this study proposed in judging the decision making process in secondary education in Malawi, was to analyze the extent to which the peripheral levels of the system, in this case the schools, participate in the decision making process. This is why the study sought the opinions of students, parents and guardians, teachers and heads of the schools. The results of this survey have proved beyond reasonable doubts that the system is highly centralized. Certainly, the government cannot overlook this. It is not, therefore, surprising to see that plans are already under way to decentralize the system.

Since the study was conducted during the time when the Ministry was in its preparatory stages for implementing the decentralization plans, and because information about the plans were not yet officially released, it is beyond the study to analyze these plans. However, from the little one can gather about the plans, and using Rondinelli (1981) and Conyers' (1984) continuum involving the transfer of decision making authority, reviewed in this study, the researcher thinks that these plans fall along the continuum of deconcentration of powers. This will involve substantial delegation of powers from the Ministry Headquarters, to the three Regional Education Offices in the country. The Ministry Headquarters will still yield ultimate authority over educational decisions in the country. The other end of the continuum, called devolution, usually cannot really work in a unitary political system like the one in Malawi.

Planning for decentralization in a given education system is a complex task. The purpose should be very clear: Decentralization is not an end in itself but is a means to more effective administration of some specific activity or a set of activities. Effective decentralization requires explicit definitions of the roles of unit at various levels to avoid duplication, and the effective flow of information between them.

In an attempt to blend centralized with decentralized decision making processes, as advocated in this study, the Ministry of Education and Culture should retain policy, planning and monitoring functions of education. There is need for curriculum policy and development to continue to be centralized. However, there is need for more bottom-up participation in the planning, development and implementation of the curriculum.

In order to strengthen the Ministry's capacity to develop policy, plan and develop the curriculum, there will be need for Ministry to decentralize some of the operational functions such as administrative, supervisory, and support services. This arrangement will solve the perennial work overload of the various officials at the Ministry Headquarters, and allow senior officials to spend more time to policy planning, implementation and monitoring of the effectiveness of the curriculum, and adapting policy in the light of its evaluated impact. The increased curriculum and instructional decision making powers given to the school heads and teachers, would enable them to create a more optimum environment for the implementation of the curriculum.

As mentioned earlier, there would be room under the study's envisaged strategy to adapt the centrally developed curricula at instructional level. On-site curriculum modification should be an integral part of this centrally

developed curriculum. Systematic on-site curriculum adaptation is an unavoidable step in the curriculum implementation process. Quite often, the rigid following of curriculum guides from a central office or a curriculum development center, leads to unsuccessful program implementation and teacher dissatisfaction. This study, has sufficient evidence of teacher dissatisfaction and apathy because of the system's rigidity.

Writing about the benefit derived from local development and adaptation of curriculum development and adaptation of curriculum development Walker, says:

> Other than teacher involvement, the main benefit derived from local development and adaptation is the tailoring of curriculum to the peculiarities of the local situation. The preference of local teachers may not coincide with national preferences. The surrounding community's preferences may not coincide with national preferences either. Local students may differ from national norms. All these differences may require that materials developed for a national market be adapted...(1976:276).

On the other hand, unco-ordinated curriculum modifications can lead to 'curriculum chaos'. As stated earlier, one remedy for this is, the blending of centralized and decentralized decision making processes in the system. The articulation of information and communication systems between the central and regional offices, as envisaged in the decentralization plans in Malawi, is key to the success of this blending.

The decentralization of certain functions in education while leaving others centralized, is one way of solving the tension between national control of educational programs and the move toward educational programs that reflect local initiative. What is needed to resolve these tensions is the development of programs that reflect, on the one hand, a concern for national consensus and, on the other, a need to respond to local initiative.

Recommendations

The findings of this study point to several important directions for educational decision making in Malawi general and curriculum decision making in particular.

While these recommendations are based on the findings and the body of literature reviewed in this study, it is hoped that they will provide the educational decision maker with sufficient grounds to chart new directions in curriculum decision making.

Based on the findings and implications of this study, it is recommended that decisions about what should be taught in the school should be based on a broad national platform. While the informed opinions of curriculum specialists and other educational professionals is important, it is, nevertheless, very important for the Ministry to include the opinions of teachers, students, school administrators, parents and the general public at

large, in the process of deciding what should be included in the curriculum.

This can be achieved in many ways. In order to cover a larger sample of the various groups mentioned above, opinion and attitude surveys should be regularly mailed to these people in order to gauge the relevance certain aspects of the curriculum before crucial decisions are made in the curriculum. Admitted, the responses from these surveys will be as diverse as the groups concerned. It will be the duty of research and curriculum workers to work out common grounds of consensus about the curriculum so that, what ever decisions are made, they should reflect the desires and aspirations of Malawians in general.

At more personal and direct levels, the Ministry should encourage the holding of open meetings in schools, and community centers to allow people of various shades of persuasion, to discuss educational problems and suggest means of resolving them. In an exercise of this nature, it is important for the organizers to keep track of records of deliberations for the purpose of sending minutes of the deliberations to the Ministry. Although immediate action cannot be taken on them, at least, this is one way of monitoring the feelings of people about certain aspects secondary education, and can act as a guide to planning and implementation of educational programs. Regarding syllabus committees and subject panels that are already in

place, it is recommended that they be broadened so that more teachers are able to participate in them. While it is admitted that such professional committees can operate effectively with membership not exceeding fifteen or so, when the curriculum is being reviewed, however, more people should be co-opted. In addition, those wishing to attend as observers, should be permitted to do so.

The responsibility for national curriculum planning and development should be vested in the hands of the Malawi Institute of Education. This would add to the Institute's responsibility over primary school curriculum development. The development of curriculum materials for primary and secondary schools at one institution, will solve the problems of continuity and content coverage across the two levels. It would also make available the human and material resources already at the Institute, for secondary curriculum development. Since according to the statute, secondary curriculum development is now vested in the hands of the Malawi National Examination Board (MANEB), this would require further amendment of this section of the Education Act.

The Malawi National Examination Board should continue playing its role of developing the Examination Syllabus based on the Teaching Syllabus that would be produced by the MIE. This would require that the two organizations work hand in hand in the development of the curriculum, on

the one hand, and examinations on the other. To make sure that both organizations know what the other is doing, MANEB should be represented in all the Subject panel sessions at MIE by its Examination Officers. Like wise, MIE's subject panel co-ordinators should be represented in all the Examination panels meetings at MANEB.

In order to discharge its responsibility for curriculum development, the Institute should work closely with other educational institutions. In this regard, the present good working relationship that exists between the Institute and the Faculty of Education at Chancellor College, should be strengthened. As the Faculty responsible for secondary teacher education in Malawi, it has a lot to contribute to the various curriculum development activities at MIE.

The Inspectorate's role in the curriculum planning and development will continue to be that of monitoring the effectiveness of the curriculum and delivery systems in the field, and coordinating the curriculum development process in the country. It should also continue to play its advisory role in helping the Ministry to formulate curriculum policy. While on the issue of policy, the Ministry of Education and Culture should re-activate the functions of the Advisory Council on Education, in order to play its role of advising the Ministry on curriculum policy.

One important forum in which the inspectors will deliberate curriculum issues with the staff at MIE and MANEB, and with teachers, are the syllabus committees in the various secondary school subjects. Unlike the subject panel which deals with the technicalities about the development of curriculum content and appropriate methodology, the Inspectorate should play an important role in the more policy decision oriented syllabus committees. This would ensure that policy makers at the Ministry are kept up to date with the thinking among teachers and other professionals in the various subjects in order to formulate policy that would be the framework for promoting learning in the schools. The syllabus committee is also an important avenue for the inspectors to inform members of what the Ministry's thinking about certain issues concerning the curriculum. However, in order to give these committees a free hand at deliberating issues, the study endorses the Ministry's recent decision of relieving the subject inspector of the position of chairperson in the committee. The Inspectorate would also be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the curriculum in the schools, co-ordinate the activities of approved site-specific materials production projects, advise the Ministry on curriculum policy.

The Inspectorate should be decentralized in order for it to carry out its supervisory, regulatory and advisory

services to the schools more effectively. This will entail the creation of positions for regional subject inspectors covering the subjects offered in the secondary school curriculum. This arrangement will resolve the problems of inadequate inspection and supervision that teachers, students and heads of school mentioned in the study. The Ministry Headquarters should still have Principal Inspectors in the broad subject divisions as is the case now except, perhaps, that the subject divisions of "Arts" and "Science" are rather too broad to take care of all the subject offerings in the curriculum. The Principal Inspectors will be responsible for co-ordinating the work of the regional field Inspectors, and would report to the Chief Inspector of Schools or whatever name the Ministry deems appropriate for this office. With regular school visits and interacting with the teachers in a non-threatening manner, it should be possible for them to remove the "fault finder" image that this position has suffered in the past.

The Ministry should gradually institute a School Based Management Strategy in order to improve the effective running of the schools. Under this strategy, the heads of schools should be given more autonomy over certain administrative, budgetary, instructional decisions. The latter would, of course, be initiated at Departmental meetings, but approved at staff meetings. In order for all

concerned to participate fully in decision making process, the current school committees should be strengthened by extending their representation to the various groups of people in the school and the community.

It is recommended that each school should have a curriculum committee in order to co-ordinate and implement the schools programs. There must be a process, probably through the submission of minutes to subject inspectors, to have ideas discussed in these committees to filter up to the national subject syllabus committees. In this way schools will share information on curriculum with other schools and contribute to curriculum renewal.

The power to make decisions in the schools should also be backed with responsibility over the school budget and expenditure of funds allocated to the school. To ensure control over expenditure, all schools should be warrant holders as this will solve the problem of procuring materials for the smooth running of the school. Since the accounting and the internal auditing responsibilities will be affected by such a decentralization process, a more efficient accounting and auditing system should be designed to monitor the financial activities of the schools to ensure prudence over financial matters.

The problems of finances will still plague the system for some time to come. In the light of this, it is recommended that schools be given more latitude to raise

funds to augment those received from government. In order to be successful in this endeavor, schools should involve the parents and the community at large. The researcher is aware that funds raised in most schools are used mainly for sports, recreation and educational visits. In fact, the main source of the money for such activities, are from the General Purpose Fund which is raised from mandatory students contributions every term. The funds envisaged here, should be raised in more creative ways by the school and should mainly go toward meeting shortfalls in curriculum materials and for facilitating the implementation of school-based curriculum projects.

Lines of communication between the school and the Regional Education Office and the Ministry Headquarters should be improved to enable the people in the field to implement national policy and attain national educational objectives, and to enable controlling officers at the top to base their policy recommendations on the realities of the schools.

Since the teacher is at the center stage for implementing the curriculum at the school level, all efforts to retain competent teachers in the classroom, should be encouraged. One area that needs to be looked into in the area of teacher motivation is, promotional and other monetary incentives, and the need for educational advancement. On promotional and monetary incentives, the

following is suggested:

a. The promotional prospects of teachers while performing teaching duties, should be increased. In order to ensure that the right people are promoted, Heads of schools in conjunction with Inspectors of schools, should be actively involved in deciding candidates for promotion. The major criteria for promotion should be the teacher's competence to promote conditions for learning in class. Only Heads of schools and Inspectors would be in a favorable position to determine this.

b. The annual salary increment of teachers should be increased substantially, and should not be automatic. The criteria for an award of such increase, should be based on performance as in (a) above.

c. Meritorious increments should be awarded to teachers for outstanding performance during the school year. The Ministry will define the parameters of the term "outstanding performance", and circulate this information to all teachers.

d. Teachers involved in national curriculum projects should be given <u>honorarium</u> for participating in such projects. This is already done for those who set, mark and moderate national examinations. The alternative monetary incentives to promotion have

been suggested because alternative (b), (c) and (d) would ensure that as many teachers as possible are affected by this than they are now promotion only. As for those teachers more involved in school based curriculum activities, their weekly teaching load should be reduced.

Regarding professional advancement, the Ministry should work hand with the University by continuing to upgrade those diploma teachers who have a chance to make it, to obtain a degree in education. Some deserving graduate teachers should also be sponsored for local and overseas training where necessary. In addition to this, the Ministry should organize workshops/seminars for teachers at national, regional and in the case of districts with more schools, at district level. Seminars are very effective ways of discussing problems teachers face in class and for disseminating new ideas and practices in education.

In order to encourage the application of knowledge and skills into every day practice, there is need to design performance based assessment techniques for appraising students' ability. So, while applauding the Malawi National Examinations Board's effort for designing examinations which include the measuring of higher order objectives and skills, and for including project and practical work in the assessment of some subjects, there is

still need for the government to review the present national examinations and school based assessment procedures with a view to integrating them as part of a more comprehensive national tool for assessing students performance. This idea will promote hard work among students, and enable the development of a flexible curriculum reflecting the realities of the local school environment. In other words, the two ideas are closely intertwined. To implement such a flexible curriculum, it is important for school-based assessment to be reflected in the marks students' get when they sit for public examinations, otherwise the same examination oriented attitude, that teachers and students have, of emphasizing and concentrating on only what they consider as "examinable," can render the whole idea of making the curriculum relevant and practical futile.

Apart from exclusively relying on examination results to gauge the effectiveness of the system, there is need to have regular system based evaluation procedures. Such a comprehensive evaluation strategy will not only assess the students' performance, but will appraise the different components of the system such as curriculum and instruction, school administration and management, and external variables such as the impact of the economy and social forces on education.

Finally, in relation to the issue of evaluation, is one of research. There is need for the system to strenghthen its research capacity. As observed earlier, education research in Malawi is, to say the least, fragmented and unco-ordinated. There is need for an autonomous organization to initiate and co-ordinate research activities in education in the country. This autonomous organization should be linked with the University of Malawi, especially with the Faculty of Education at Chancellor College. The researcher envisages this Center for Education Research to operate along similar lines like the Centre for Educational Research in Zomba, and other research centers on the drawing board at the University of Malawi.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study points to the following directions for further research:

- Since this study coincided with the decentralization of education in the country, there will be need in a few years to conduct a study evaluating the success of the education reforms, against the findings of this study.
- Teachers play an important role in education and, this study has recommended that they have more say in curriculum decision making. There is need, however, for a study to be conducted to consider the specific roles

teachers can play in curriculum planning, development, implementation, and evaluation.

- In order to effectively implement a School Based Management Strategy (SBMS) for secondary schools, there is need for a small pilot project in which a few secondary schools will be selected to experiment on this approach. The data obtained from this research, will help in the implementation of this strategy on a national scale.
- The responses from students and teachers have shown that there is more to teaching and learning than the eye can see. There is, therefore, the need to promote small scale classroom based research which will shed more light on factors that promote or inhibit student learning. Such research activities would be co-ordinated jointly by the Inspectorate and the Centre for Educational Research whose creation is recommended above.

Closing

This study made an inquiry into curriculum decision making process in Malawi. The overall results of the study have revealed that educational decision making in general, and curriculum decision making in particular, is centralized.

There are many factors that can bring about quality education in the country. It is the researcher's belief that one of the primary factors for bringing about such improvements in secondary schools, is to have a curriculum that reflects both individual and societal needs and aspirations. One way of ensuring effective curriculum choices is to have all concerned in education to participate and contribute to the planning and implementation of educational programs.

The study, is therefore, advocating a shared decision making strategy operating within the framework of a uniform and centrally co-ordinated national curriculum. The study is cognizant of the Government's endeavor to improve secondary education in the country, and it is also aware of current changes taking place within the educational sector which when fully implemented and institionalized, will bring about improvements in education in general. The findings and ideas in this study, it is hoped, will make a small contribution to the Ministry's efforts to improve secondary school curriculum planning, development, and implementation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

A SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SECONDARY, TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN MALAWI BY THE JOHNSON REPORT

A SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SECONDARY, TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN MALAWI BY THE JOHNSON REPORT

Secondary Education

1. Give the highest priority to the expansion and staffing of secondary education during the next 15 years (para. 37).

2. Plan to increase progressively the proportion of primary-school leavers who attend secondary school, with 15 percent as the goal for 1980 (para. 39).

3. Rapidly expand existing secondary schools and build new ones to accommodate a growth from 3,000 pupils at present to 40,000 by 1980 (para. 41).

4. Concentrate such schools in the more populous areas, with larger enrollments in fewer schools, with size large enough (from 300 upward, and preferably from 500 upward) to realize the advantages of varied curriculum, specialized staff and facilities, and economy of operation (para. 42).

5. So far as compatible with the size criterion, and considering the possibilities of pupil transportation, construct day secondary schools and keep boarding schools to a minimum (para. 43).

6. Strive to provide at all secondary schools equal or comparable educational opportunities in terms of curriculum, equipment, teachers' amenities, grounds, staff, and prestige, whether existing or new schools or boarding schools (para. 44).

7. Revise, improve, and constantly review the process of selection for secondary school, with emphasis on multiple rather than single evaluation and on aptitude and creativity as well as scholastic marks (para 45).

8. Set up a new examination system, with a separate examination branch in the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education, with careful consideration of the merits of establishing an Examinations Council modeled on the West African Examination Council (para. 46).

7. Enlarge the basis for pupil evaluation by combining the use of a new Secondary School Entrance Examination and primary school assessment consisting of academic records and the results of a series of diagnostic, aptitude, and

assessment tests spread over the last two or three primary years (para. 47).

8. Make the secondary school curriculum flexible and comprehensive, with the introduction of subject options in technical, secretarial and commercial, handicraft, and home economics courses and the use of specialist teachers, both residential and itinerant (para. 48).

9. With the aid of a College of Education in the University and consultative machinery as thought desirable, continuously scrutinize curriculum for adaptation to the needs of a new African nation and the complicated and changing demands of preparing simultaneously for vocations, further study, and citizenship (para 50).

10. Terminate Sixth Form work as soon as post-secondary opportunity available elsewhere and permit present pupils to complete their studies and be given, if desired fitting exemptions for admission to the new University with appropriate academic standing (para. 51).

11. As proposed in the other sections, provide in each school so far as feasible workshops, equipment, and specialist staff required for technical and vocational opportunities; and drastically accelerate the output of secondary teachers with a view to the complete Africanisation of staff, but, in the interim, vigorously recruit from the Peace Corps, the Voluntary Service Overseas, and other expatriate sources (para 52).

Technical and Vocational Education

12. Develop as a part of the educational system carefully planned opportunities for technical and vocational education, with the appropriate development of technological knowledge and skills: (1) through special schools and (2) by infusion or incorporation into regular schools at the primary, secondary, and higher education level (para. 56).

13. Accept the fact of rural exodus among youth and plan to train them for gainful employment in new locations, while also improving technical opportunities for youth remaining in the rural areas (para. 59).

14. Introduce in the later primary years some form of technical training, emphasizing manual dexterity and creativity, with special attention to the needs of the great majority of pupils whose formal education will terminate at the primary level (para. 60).

15. For children out of school, for whatever reason, devise a variety of informal out-of-school means of using their time and developing their communication and labor skills (para 61).

16. Prepare for the early maturity of girls and the future role of women by providing domestic science in the top standards of the primary school (para. 62).

17. Provide exposure to agriculture in the primary standards by infusion of awareness and agrarian relevance into the courses generally, including the science course, omitting reliance on hard, repetitive manual labor in school gardens (para. 63).

18. Exclude agriculture from the secondary school curriculum and rely on the basic science courses and the special postprimary or post secondary agricultural training institutions (para. 64).

19. Consider providing in both primary and secondary schools the required special teacher competence by means described in the section on teacher training and improvement.

20. Introduce serious, well planned, and well equipped technical and commercial subjects by persuading examination bodies to offer these subjects as options for school certificate examinations (para. 67).

21. Provide as a planning target, for realization as soon as funds, facilities, and staff will permit, the construction and equipping of 40 workshops in the same number of secondary schools at an estimated cost of 235,000 pounds (para. 69)

22. Give attention to the balanced and coordinated development of the special technical and vocational schools and programs outside the regular primary, secondary, and higher educational institutions (e.g., the Polytechnic, technical schools, farmers institutes, Colby School, etc.) (para.70).

23. Press with all the vigor the construction and opening of the polytechnic planned in Blantyre, using temporary facilities for the beginning of the part of the program in the interim (para.71).

24. Without prejudice to its present function, keep in mind as the Polytechnic is planned that it might, subject to the University's location and its officer's judgment, become an

integral part of the long-term science and engineering development of the University (para. 72).

25. Develop the curriculum of the Polytechnic to meet the full time and part-time day and evening needs of persons whose education has been interrupted, are employed or over-age, need specialised training, or for other reasons cannot be served in the regular schools (para. 74).

26. Include in the Polytechnic curriculum continuing education opportunities, technical and commercial courses, and preparatory subjects for School Certificate of Education (including advanced level) para. 75).

27. Also include (1) the operation of extramural program of the University under the direction of the Polytechnic's administrative head (para. 76); (2) a correspondence program, with particular emphasis on technical opportunities patterned after the New Zealand experience (para. 77); and (3) all feasible means of mass or low-cost communication - by radio, television, and other new teaching media (para.78).

28. For these purposes, incorporate the College of Commerce and the other Education Center, both in Blantyre, within the Polytechnic, plus whatever function need to be absorbed from the Soche Technical School to avoid duplication of effort and equipment and, so far as feasible, the several technical training functions now performed by the various Ministries (para 79).

29. In the light of these changes, re-examine the technical schools and trade schools and link them with the leadership and professional guidance of the Polytechnic in order that a rational system of technical and vocational opportunity will be generally available without duplication (para. 80).

30. Completely absorb the currently planned College of Agriculture, both academically and physically, into the new College of Natural Resources of the University, converting the attractive Bunda site and the buildings approaching construction into broader new service (para. 81).

31. Merge the Colby School of Agriculture with the College of Natural Resources as soon as the latter can supply the government's needs for sub-professional agricultural personnel (para. 82).

32. Continue to use the farmers institutes to supplement formal and informal educational opportunities by offering farm families short courses of a practical nature, leisure -time activities, and literacy and citizenship training (para. 83).

APPENDIX B

THE FUNCTION, MEMBERSHIP AND ROLE OF SUBJECT SYLLABUS COMMITTEE IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

THE FUNCTION, MEMBERSHIP AND ROLE OF THE SUBJECT SUBJECT SYLLABUS COMMITTEE IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

1. Subject syllabus committees and the Inspector's role

The normal vehicle for curriculum and syllabus development is the subject syllabus committee. The inspector is responsible for proposing for the Ministry's approval the subject syllabus committees for all subjects that fall under his control by marshalling all the available expertise in the subject area concerned. The subject committees so created are responsible to the Ministry of Education and Culture for all their activities.

2. Functions of the subject syllabus committee

To recommend to and advise the Ministry of Education on the following:

2.1 Proposing for the Ministry's approval syllabus committee members.

2.3 Setting books suitable for use with examination syllabuses.

2.4 Development of teaching and learning materials; teaching aids.

2.5 Development of teacher support services.

2.6 Proposing for Ministry's approval for co-option such additional members as may be necessary for the discharge of its business

2.7 Such other matters as may be referred to it by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

3. Membership and office bearers

3.1 Membership - Members are proposed by the subject Inspector for Ministry's approval with appropriate memorandum.

3.2 Chairman - The subject Inspector is Chairman of all Ministry of Education and Culture Syllabus Committees.

3.3 Secretary - The secretary is appointed by members of the subject syllabus committee from among its own members.

3.4 Number - It is recommended that a committee should be no larger than ten members to be effective in the execution of its business.

4. Method of Reporting

4.1 Minutes - All minutes of syllabus committees will be submitted to the Chief Inspector of Schools with appropriate recommendations for Ministry's approval.

4.2 Presiding of Meetings - The subject Inspector as chairman of the syllabus committee will preside at all meetings.

5. Terms of Conditions of Office

5.1 Members of the subject syllabus committees shall be appointed initially by the Ministry of Education and Culture for a period of three years; this period to be extended for further periods of three years by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

5.2 Any member who is absent for more than two successive meetings of the committee without adequate reasons may be asked to resign from committee membership.

5.3 The committee may invite any person to attend a meeting of the committee. The invited person may, with the consent of the chairman, speak but shall have no powers to vote.

6. Frequency of Meetings

6.1 All syllabus committees shall meet at least once a year. Arrangements for such meetings will be made by the subject inspector with approval of the Chief Inspector of Schools.

6.2 Two thirds of the members of the committee as nominated by the Ministry of Education and Culture shall be a quorum.

6.3 Adequate notice must be given for all subject committee meetings. It is considered that three weeks' notice is about the minimum length of time.

7. Processing Syllabus Development

7.1 All syllabus change must be submitted through the Chief Inspectors of Schools to the Principal Secretary proposed changes in some detail in the

appropriate memorandum seeking Ministry's approval.

7.2 All new textbooks intended for use with the new syllabus must be specified in the above memorandum and the books should be submitted for approval as well.

7.3 All structural changes of the examination arising from the proposed syllabus development must also be cleared together with 7.1 and 7.2 above.

7.4 All syllabus changes approved by the Ministry must be followed by a circular letter to all institutions involved giving at least two years notice before examination is due on the new syllabus. The circular letter should be attached to the new syllabus indicating what changes have been effected together with a sample examination paper.

7.5 In cases where the new syllabus calls for the introduction of new teaching/learning aids (the instructional media), an updated list of all the required teaching aids must be submitted to all institutions concerned.

7.6 Suppliers of educational materials such as Malawi Book Service must be informed of all syllabus changes requiring institutions to acquire new textbooks and equipment (teaching and learning materials).

7.7 It should be emphasized that it is the duty of the subject inspector to process the approval of a new syllabus.

8. Dissemination of curriculum materials

Ministerial approval must be sought before all curriculum materials which include teachers' notes, teacher's guides, pupils notes, etc.) are disseminated to schools. It is the subject inspector's responsibility to ensure that all curriculum materials emanating from the Ministry of Education and Culture are of high quality in all respects. No mediocre curriculum materials should be sent to school as this lowers the standing of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

9. Guidelines for Evaluating a textbook or manuscript

Textbooks play such an important part in education that they should be chosen with great care. The subject inspector is required from time to time

evaluate textbooks, either as inspection copies or in manuscript form. It is his/her task to decide whether to recommend the book as it stands or to recommend it subject to specified changes (in the case of manuscript or proposed adaptation), or not to recommend it. He must decide whether to recommend it as a pupils' textbook (main or supplementary), a teacher's book or just a library book.

(Specific guidelines not included in this appendix).

10. Need for continuous renewal of the syllabus

Once the instructional materials have ben sent to schools, there is need to monitor their effectiveness with a view to responding to evolving needs of the teachers and pupils as they use the materials. As teachers' work with the new materials, new problems emerge and it is the duty of the inspector to cope with such problems. New development and trends in the subject area that are relevant to the syllabus should be communicated to the teachers to help them up date the instructional materials. This may effectively be done by the inspector producing supplementary notes and exercises which should be sent to schools with specific instructions on how to incorporate the materials in the teaching. Other relevant supplementary materials should include new experiments and passages for analysis if they there are not available in the school library. In the process of producing supplementary materials, the inspector should take the opportunity to improve the equipment and experiments and modify the initial and in-service teacher education syllabuses on the basis of accumulated experience with the original instructional materials. Teacher's evaluation test questions for pupils should be modified and upgraded to make them more valid in relation to the new developments in the syllabus.

11. Effectiveness of the syllabus with the passage of time

"Time diminishes wonder" and this is true of many things. The adequacy of a syllabus and requisite instructional materials is a function of time. Changing conditions in the country may demand a change in the foci of a syllabus; new developments in the subject matter may determine a shift in emphasis from old concepts to new ones from knowledge studies to issue studies. Changes in the socio-economic conditions and values in the country and development

in educational technology may induce and facilitate the creation of new syllabuses and requisite instructional materials. Thus, continuous periodic examination, reappraisal, adaptation and modification of the syllabus and instructional materials is necessary if it is to maintain its dynamic nature. Once again, it needs to be emphasized hare that this is the task of the appropriate syllabus committee under the guidance of the subject inspector. The mandatory annual syllabus committee meetings provide a forum for exchange of ideas and experience on how the syllabus is working in the schools and whether a review is due. As a guide, each syllabus is due for review after it has been in use for five years

11. Positive and negative feed-back effects of a syllabus

When the objectives of a syllabus are being satisfactorily achieved, this constitutes positive feedback and when the objectives are not being achieved, this constitutes negative feedback. It sometimes happens that a new syllabus which had seemed effective during the formative evaluation stages proves inadequate in certain respects to meet the intended objectives. Such a syllabus is said to have "deteriorated" if it loses effectiveness this way. This may occur in selected schools or groups of students such as urban versus rural; or it may be observed that learning out comes continue to be satisfactory in respect of knowledge and comprehension while with mental abilities such as application and synthesis, the syllabus is no longer effective. Sometimes deterioration may occur for some parts of the syllabus although the syllabus as a whole may be effective with respective to some students, teachers and schools in the achievement of certain objectives. This process which has a partial or differential decrease element in the effectiveness of a syllabus is called differential deterioration. Pupil performance in national examinations should be analyzed carefully by the inspector to ascertain, whether decline in performance is due to deterioration of the syllabus. The chief examiner's reports provide valuable information for this analysis. Annual syllabus committee meetings should be utilized to detect any signs of deterioration of the syllabus that might begin to be felt by teachers. Quality control through summative evaluation of a syllabus should be undertaken under these circumstances.

12. Approach to syllabus change

The process of changing a syllabus may be approached in two possible ways. Syllabus changes may be effected in a-step-by-step fashion or by a complete overhaul. The advantages of the first approach is that changes based on continuous formative evaluation of the syllabus, do not require major structural changes and do not normally meet with resistance with teachers. These advantages, however, constitute disadvantages also in that the changes tend to touch on peripheral issues of the syllabus and do not change the philosophy or rationale of the syllabus. The continued use of the existing framework of the syllabus imposes restrictions for radical changes to be effected. Where an overhaul of a syllabus is intended, the subject inspector is advised to seek the advice of the Chief Inspector of Schools before embarking on the exercise. Otherwise step-by-step syllabus changes are encouraged by all subject inspectors.

APPENDIX C

COVERING LETTER FOR QUESTIONNAIRES

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

PRINCIPAL
Z.D. Kadzamira, B.A., Ph.D.

CHANCELLOR COLLEGE
P.O. Box 280 ZOMBA, MALAWI

Our Ref.

Your Ref.

Telephone: ZOMBA 522 222
Telegrams: CHANCOLL ZOMBA

4th September, 1987.

_____

_____

_____

_____

CURRICULUM PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

I am currently carrying out a research on the above topic. The questionnaire attached has been designed in order to investigate certain aspects of curriculum planning practices in the schools.

You have been randomly sampled to respond to this questionnaire. Please assist by answering the questions as thoughtfully as you can. Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Your assistance in this research will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

D.D. CHIMWENJE
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX D

COVERING LETTER FOR PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE IN CHICHEWA

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

PRINCIPAL
Z.D Kadzamira, B.A., Ph.D.

CHANCELLOR COLLEGE
P.O Box [illegible], ZOMBA, MALAWI

Our Ref

Your Ref

Telephone ZOMBA 522 522
Telegrams CHANCOLL ZOMBA

5th September, 1987.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Mafunso omwe aphatikizidwa kukalatayi ndiwofuna kufufuza zina mwa zamaphunziro msukulu za sekondale.

Inu mwasankhidwa kuti mutiyankhireko mafunsowa. Chonde tithandizeni potiyankhira mafunsowa mwachilungamo. Zomwe mutiyankho ife tidzazikhulupirira kwambiri. Tikulonjeza kuti dzina lanu silidzakhudzidwa ndi mayankho amene mutipatse.

Zikomo,

D.D. CHIMENJE
MTHAMBI YA ZAMAPHUNZIRO
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE

APPENDIX E

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the questions carefully and: (a) indicate the choice of your answers by placing a tick ( ) on the spaces provided against the appropriate statements, letters or numbers, and (b) write down your answers on the spaces provided.

SECTION A.

1. Sex M _____ F _____

2. Age _____

3. Name of your school_____

4. How many years have you been at this school?
_____

5. What is the distance between your school and your home?

_____

SECTION B.

6. The way the teacher teach has influence on how well you learn in class. In what ways do you give information (feedback) to your teachers to show that they are effective or not?

_____
_____
_____

7. Do you observe changes in the way the teachers teach after giving them such information?
Yes ___ No ___

8. What types of changes? Positive __ Negative __

9. Do you feel it is part of your responsibility as a student to contribute to the effectiveness of instruction and learning?
Yes ___ No ___

10. Can you suggest ways of helping the class to improve learning?

_____
_____

11. Do you think inspectors of schools play an important role in classroom instruction and learning? Yes _____ No _____

12. Why do you think so?

_____
_____
_____

13. Since you were selected to secondary school, have inspectors of schools discussed curriculum and instructional issues with you?
Yes ___ No __

14. Have you felt any need to talk to them?
Yes __ No___

15. If the answer is yes, on what specific issue(s)?

_____
_____

16. In general, what do you think is the relationship between your teachers and inspectors of schools?

_____ (a) Very good
_____ (b) Good
_____ (c) Satisfactory
_____ (d) Poor

17. Place a tick ( ) against the word which best describes your situation.
I discuss curriculum or syllabus issues with my parents/guardian:

_____ (a) Frequently
_____ (b) Sometimes
_____ (c) Seldom

18. The relevance of certain topics and/or subjects in the secondary curriculum have been questioned by students. How do you judge the relevance of such topics and subjects? Below are some of the reasons why you think certain topics and/or subjects are relevant. In order of importance place a tick ( ) under the appropriate number.

		1	2	3	4	5	6
(a)	Past examination papers do not strongly reflect items or questions from those topics.....						
(b)	The topic(s) or subject(s) relate to real life problem solving situations.....						
(c)	They are not relevant to the job market.....						
(d)	They are too theoretical.....						
(e)	I perform poorly in those topics						
(f)	I think the way the topics are taught affects their relevance..						

If you have reasons other than those above, list them on the space provided below:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

19. Does the school provide ways and means of addressing your opinions and views about the curriculum? Yes ___ No ___

20. If the answer is yes, what first line of communication do you usually use when addressing curriculum and instructional issues?

_____ (a) Subject teacher
_____ (b) Class monitor

_____ (c) Deputy Headmaster
_____ (d) Headmaster
_____ (e) Politicians
_____ (f) Other teachers
_____ (g) Form Master/Mistress

21. After the issue has been addressed to any of the above what happens thereafter?

_____
_____

22. During the past two years, have there been any changes in the curriculum that have addressed some of your concerns?
Yes ___ No ____
If your response is yes, answer question 23.

23. Did you feel that as a student body you were responsible for such changes? Yes ___ No___

24. During the same period, have there been any changes in the curriculum that you have agreed with?
Yes _____ No _____

25. If you still remember those changes, please list them on the space provided below:

_____
_____
_____
_____

26. If given a chance, of the following committee activities, what would you like to be involved in? Please state the order of preference in the spaces provided by placing a tick ( ) under the appropriate number.

		1	2	3	4	5
(a)	Serve on the Curriculum Planning Committee deciding what is to be taught in the schools.....					
(b)	Sit on the School Disciplinary Committee.....					

(c)	Serve on the Boarding and Student' Welfare Committee.....						
(d)	Serve on the Subject Syllabus Come i.e. help prepare and/or select curriculum materials.....						
(e)	Serve on the Sports Committee.....						

27. What reasons do you have for your first two and last two choices?

1st Choice:_____

_____

2nd Choice: _____

_____

_____

4th Choice:

_____

_____

_____

28. In the first two committees chosen, which of the following would you best work with? Please state the order of preference in the places provided by placing a tick ( ) under the appropriate number.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
(a)	Local politicians.....								
(b)	Heads of Schools.....								
(c)	Teachers.....								
(d)	Fellow Students.....								
(e)	Religious leaders.....								
(f)	Ordinary members of the community.....								
(g)	Curriculum specialists...								
(h)	Inspectors of Schools....								

29. Briefly give reasons for your first three choices.

1st Choice:_____

_____

_____

2nd Choice:_____

_____

_____

7th Choice_____

_____

_____

8th Choice:_____

_____

_____

30. In order of importance which do you consider as priority areas that you feel you should directly participate in decision making at your school?

		1	2	3	4	5	6
(a)	Discipline.....						
(b)	Curriculum and Instruction						
(c)	Food and Catering						
(d)	Entertainment and Leisure						
(e)	Building and Grounds maintenance.....						
(f)	Supervising study and library periods						

31. In this questionnaire, the term "curriculum" has been frequently used. What is your understanding of this term; define the term in your own words.

_____

_____

_____

_____

32. If you have further comments to make on the issues concerning secondary education, especially those related to curriculum, instruction and learning, please state them in the space provided below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX F

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the questions carefully and: (a) indicate the choice of your answers by placing a tick ( ) against the spaces provided on the appropriate statements, letters or nombers, (b) write down your answers on the spaces provided.

SECTION A.

1. Sex M ____ F ____

   Age: Place a tick ( ) against the correct letter.

   _____ (a) Under 25 years

   _____ (b) 26-35 years

   _____ (c) 36-45 years

   _____ (d) 46-55 years

   _____ (e) Over 55 years

3. What is your educational qualifications

   e.g. Dip. Ed.; B.A.; UCE;M.Sc. etc.

_____

4. Name of School _____

5. How many years have you taught in secondary schools? _____

6. How long have you taught at your present school? ___

SECTION B.

7. Apart from teaching, what other responsibilities do you perform at the school?

   _____

8. Are you involved in curriculum planning and decision

making process?

Yes _____ No _____

9. If the answer is yes, at what level? Place a tick ( ) against the appropriate statements below

10. Elaborate what issues you are involved in at the level(s) you have indicated in 9.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

11. At present do you think you fully participate in curriculum decision making? Yes ___ No ___

12. If the answer is no, state reasons why this is the case.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

13. If given a chance, of the following, which one would you like to be involved in? Please state the order of preference in the spaces provided below by placing a tick ( ) under the appropriate number.

	1	2	3	4
(a) Serve on the Curriculum Planning Committee, i.e deciding what is to be taught in schools.....				
(b) Sit on the School Disciplinary Committee.....				
(c) Serve on the Boarding and Students' Welfare Committee.....				

(d) Serve on the Subject Syllabus Committee, i.e to choose curriculum materials.....							

14. What reasons do you have for your first two choices?

Ist Choice: _____

_____

_____

2nd Choice:_____

_____

_____

15. In the first two committees you have chosen in 13, which of the following would you,best work with?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(a) Local politicians.....							
(b) Heads of schools.....							
(c) Fellow teachers.....							
(d) Students.....							
(e) Religious leaders.....							
(f) Ordinary members of the community.....							

16. Briefly state reasons for your first three choices on the space provided below.

Ist Choice: _____

_____

_____

2nd Choice: _ _____

_____

_____

3rd Choice: _____

_____

_____

17. Is the statement below a fair assessment of the situation in the secondary school education system in

Malawi?

Curriculum planning and decision making process is centralized within the Ministry of Education headquarters. Yes __ No __

18. If the answer is yes, how do teachers influence the decisions made?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

19. What channels of communication do you use when addressing curriculum issues at the Ministry of Education Headquarters?

_____
_____
_____

20. From past experience, have these channels been "open" enough and/or effective? Yes ____ No ____

21. If they are not, what changes in the system would you like to take place so that your views and opinions are heard and taken into consideration when curriculum decisions are made.

22. Are parents and members of the local community involved in school activities ? Yes ___ No ___

23. If the answer is yes, what type of activities are they involved in?

_____
_____
_____
_____

24. Apart from sending report cards, are they any means of informing parents/guardians about the progress of their children/dependents, and about other activities and issues in the school?

Yes ____ No ____

25. If the answer is yes, what other means of contact do you maintain with parents/guardians?

26. Which of the following statements below best describe your views about parental and community involvement in school activities.

_____ (a) Parental and community participation in school affairs has positive effects on school programs.

_____ (b) Parental and community participation in school affairs is counter productive.

_____ (c) Parental and community participation in school activities does not make any difference to the effectiveness of school programs.

27. Briefly state the reasons for your opinion.

_____

_____

_____

_____

28. What is your opinion on the following issue. Delete the inappropriate phrases.

The examination system has... a great influence/little influence/no influence....on the way subjects are taught, and on the curriculum in general.

29. Give reasons for holding this opinion.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

30. Do you think inspectors of schools play an important role in classroom instruction and learning?

Yes ___ No ___

31. Give reasons to support your answer.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

32. How many times have you been inspected during the past year?

Place a tick ( ) against the appropriate letter.

_____ (a) Once

_____ (b) Twice

_____ (c) 3 times

_____ (d) 4 times

_____ (e) More than 4 times

33. What role do you perceive your subject inspectors playing?

_____ (a) As supervisors

_____ (b) Inspectors i.e. fault finders.

_____ (c) Both Supervisors and Inspectors.

34. What is the relationship between you and inspectors of schools?

_____ (a) Very good

_____ (b) Good

_____ (c) Satisfactory

_____ (d) Poor

35. During the past two years, have there been any changes in the curriculum that have addressed your concern?

Yes ____ No ____

36. If the answer is yes, Did you as teachers feel that you were responsible for bringing about such changes?

Yes ___ No ___

37. During the same period, have there been any changes in the curriculum that you have agreed with?

Yes ___ No ___

38. If you still remember those changes, please list them down.

_____
_____
_____
_____

39. In your opinion, what issues are affecting the quality of secondary education today?

_____

40. In this questionnaire, the term "curriculum has been frequently used. What is your understanding of this term? Define the term in your own words.

41. If you have any comments to make about secondary education, please state them on the space provided below.

APPENDIX G

HEADS OF SCHOOLS' QUESTIONNAIRE

HEADS OF SCHOOLS' QUESTIONNAIRE.

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the questions carefully and put your answers by placing a tick ( ) against the spaces provided on the appropriate statements, letters or numbers. Write down your answers on the spaces provided.

SECTION A.

1. Sex M _____ F _____

2. Age: _____ (a) Under 25 years
   _____ (b) 26-35 years
   _____ (c) 36-45 years
   _____ (d) 46-55 years
   _____ (e) Over 55 years

3. What is your educational qualifications? E.g. Dip.Ed., B.Sc., UCE, M.A. etc.
   _____

4. Apart from your professional qualification, have you undergone any administrative and management training? Yes _____ No _____

5. If the answer is "yes", how did you get it?
   _____ (a) Attending Workshops/Seminars
   _____ (b) By Correspondence
   _____ (c) Attending College/University

6. From the categories below, place a tick ( ) against the which best describes the type and situation of your school:

7. How many years have you headed a secondary school?
   _____

8. How long have you headed your present school? ____

SECTION B.

9. At what level(s) do you participate in curriculum planning and decision making issues? You can tick ( ) more than one.

_____ (a) Classroom level
_____ (b) School level
_____ (c) National level

10. Which level(s) do you think participation would benefit your school most? _____

11. Can you mention school related committees to which you are a member of?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

12. Who assists you in curriculum planning activities in the school?

_____
_____
_____

13. Imagine you have received letters of complaint about the curriculum from parents and members of your community in which they state their dissatisfaction with certain areas of the school curriculum. How would you go about addressing the

issue. Please elaborate on the standard procedures currently in use.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

14. If given a latitude of flexibility, how would you address the same problem posed in 13?

_____
_____
_____

_____
_____
_____

15. How many times has your school been visited by inspectors of schools during the past academic year?

(a) _____ Once

(b) _____ Twice

(c) _____ 3 times

(d) _____ 4 times

(e) _____ More than 4 times

16. Do you think Inspectors of school play an important role in classroom instruction and school administration?

Yes ___ No ___

17. Give reasons to support your answer.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

18. What role do you see Inspectors of schools playing?

_____ (a) Supervisors

_____ (b) Inspectors, i.e. fault finders

_____ (c) Both Supervisors and Inspectors

19. What is the relationship between you and inspectors of schools?

_____ (a) Very good

_____ (b) Good

_____ (c) Satisfactory

_____ (d) Poor

20. During the past year did you initiate curriculum and instructional changes for:

(a) your school? Yes _____ No _____

(b) the whole secondary school system?

Yes _____ No _____

21. If the answer is yes, explain why you did this and, secondly the procedures you followed?

_____

22. During the past two years, have there been any changes in the curriculum that have addressed some of your concerns? Yes _____ No _____

23. If the answer is yes, did you feel you contributed in bringing about such changes? Yes _____ No _____

24. During the same period, have there been any changes in the curriculum that you have agreed with? Yes _____ No _____

25. If you still remember those changes, please list them down.

26. Apart from sending report cards, what other means of communication do you maintain with parents and guardians?

_____
_____
_____
_____

27. Which of the statements below best describe your views about parental and community involvement in school activities?

_____ (a) Parental and community participation in school affairs has a positive effect on school programs

_____ (b) Parental and community participation in school affairs is counter productive

_____ (c) Parental and community participation in school activities does not make any difference to the effectiveness of the school program

28. Briefly state reasons for your opinion.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

29. What is your opinion on the following issue.

Delete the inappropriate phrases.

The Examination system has... a great influence/little influence/no influence... on the way subjects are taught and on the curriculum in general.

30. Give reasons for holding this opinion.

_____
_____
_____

31. Are you satisfied with the present communication channels with the Ministry of Education Headquarters? Yes _____ No _____

32. If the answer is "no", can you suggest ways of improving the communication channels?

_____
_____
_____
_____

33. Which of the following set up would you favor?

_____ (a) Decentralization administration of secondary schools.

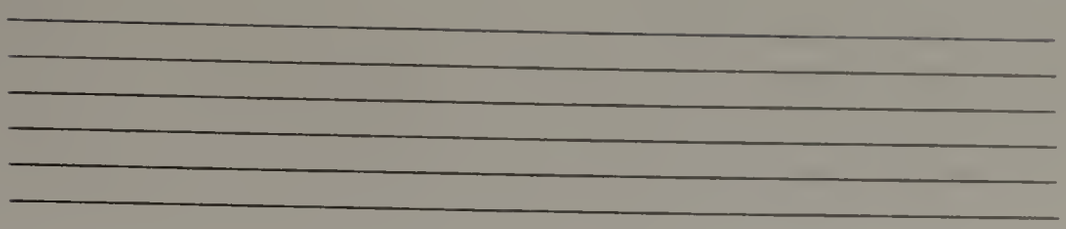
_____ (b) Centralized administration of secondary schools.

34. Give reasons for your choice.

35. In your opinion, what issues are affecting the quality of secondary education in Malawi today?

36. In this questionnaire, the term "curriculum" has been frequently used. What is your understanding of this term. Define the term in your own words.

37. If you have any comments to make about secondary education, please state them on the space provided below.



APPENDIX H

PARENTS/GUARDIANS' QUESTIONNAIRE

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTION: Read the questions carefully and: (a) indicate the choice of your answers by placing a tick ( ) on the spaces provided against the appropriate statements, letters or numbers, and (b) write down your answers on the spaces provided.

SECTION A.

1. Sex M _____ F _____

2. Age: _____ (a) Under 25 years
_____ (b) 26-35 years
_____ (c) 36-45 years
_____ (d) 46-55 years
_____ (e) Over 55 years

3. Which of the following statements best describe your situation:

_____ (a) Have never been to school but can read and write.
_____ (b) Cannot read nor write.
_____ (c) Have been to school and can read and write.
_____ (d) Completed Primary Education.
_____ (e) Completed Junior Secondary Education.
_____ (f) Completed Secondary Education.
_____ (g) Possess a college/university diploma or degree.

4. What do you do for a living?

_____

5. How long have you lived in this area? _____

6. How many children/dependents do you have going to secondary school? _____

7. What is the distance between your home and the secondary school your child or dependent is attending? _____

8. What is the distance between your home and the nearest secondary school? _____

SECTION B.

9. If given a chance, of the following activities, what would you like to be involved in. Please state the order of preference in the spaces provided by placing a tick ( ) under the appropriate number.

	1	2	3	4
(a) Serve on the Curriculum Planning Committee i.e. deciding what is to be taught in the schools.....				
(b) Sit on the School Disciplinary Committee.....				
(c) Serve on the Boarding and Students' Welfare Committee.....				
(d) Serve on the Subject Syllabus Committee e.g. to help prepare or select curriculum materials.....				

10. What reasons do you have for your first two choices?

1st Choice: _____

_____

_____

2nd Choice: _____

_____

11. In the first two committees you have chosen in 9, which of the following would you best work with. Please state the order of preference by placing a tick ( ) under the appropriate number.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(a)	Local Politicians.....							
(b)	Heads of schools.....							
(c)	Teachers.....							
(d)	Students.....							
(e)	Religious leaders.....							
(f)	Ordinary members of the community.....							
(g)	Inspectors of schools.....							
(h)	Curriculum specialists.....							

12. Briefly give reasons for your first two and last two choices.

1st Choice: _____

_____

_____

2nd Choice: _____

_____

7th Choice: _____

_____

8th Choice: _____

_____

13. If you have any groups of people you would include on the committee, list them on space provided below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. Do you think that by involving parents and guardians like you in curriculum planning and decision making, this would improve the secondary school program? Yes _____ No _____

15. What makes you think so?
_____
_____
_____

16. What secondary school related activities have you involved yourself during the past year or so?
_____
_____

17. What assistance would you give secondary schools in order to improve their effectiveness?
_____
_____
_____
_____

18. Are you familiar with the secondary school curriculum?
Yes _____ No _____
If your response is "yes", answer questions 19 and 20.

19. Is the knowledge and skills taught in secondary schools reflect the needs and aspirations of the local community? Be specific.
_____
_____
_____
_____

20. What type of skills and knowledge do you think the secondary school curriculum should emphasize?

21. Do you follow up the progress of your child or dependent at school?

Yes _____ No _____

22. If the answer is "yes". How do you do this?

23. Apart from receiving report cards, what other means of communication do you maintain with the school?

24. In your opinion what other ways would promote communication and community participation in secondary schools?

25. Students pay fees in secondary schools, if you were asked to contribute in money or in kind towards the improvement of the secondary school your child or

dependent is attending, would you do it?

Yes _____ No _____

26. If the answer is "no", state reasons below.

_____
_____
_____
_____

27. What if you were asked to contribute to a local secondary school regardless whether any of your children or dependents are attending schools, would you do it? Yes _____ No _____

28. Give reasons for your answer.

_____
_____
_____

29. If you have any comment to make about secondary education, state them below.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX I

PARENTS/GUARDIANS' QUESTIONNAIRE IN CHICHEWA

MALANGIZO: Werengani mosamala mafunso otstirawa - (a) Chongani ( ) yankho limene mwasankha pafunso lili lonse pamalo amene mwapatsidwa motsatana ndi funso, lemba, kapena nambala; (b) lembani mayankho anu pamalo amene mwapatsidwa.

GAWO LOYAMBA.

1. Kodi ndinu mai kapena bambo?

   Ndine Mai _____ Ndine Bambo _____

2. Zaka zakubadwa:

   _____ (a) Sizinakwana 25

   _____ (b) Pakati pa 26 and 35

   _____ (c) Pakati pa 36 and 45

   _____ (d) Pakati pa 46 ndi 55

   _____ (e) Kupitilira 55

3. Mwaziganizo zotsatirazi, ndichiganizo chiti chomwe chikufotokoza momveka za inu?

   _____ (a) Sindinapite kusukulu koma ndimatha kulemba ndiponso kuwerenga.

   _____ (b) Sinditha kulemba ndi kuwerenga.

   _____ (c) Ndinapita kusukulu ndimatha kulemba ndiponso kuwerenga.

   _____ (d) Ndinamaliza maphunziro a pulaimale.

   _____ (e) Ndinafika kusekondale koma ndinalekeza Fomu 2.

   _____ (f) Ndinatsiriza maphunziro a kusekondale.

   _____ (g) Ndili ndi 'diploma' kapena 'degree' ya koleji.

4. Mumapanga chiyani kuti muzidzithandiza?

   _____

   _____

5. Kodi mwakhala nthawi yayitali bwanji mdera lino?

   _____

6. Ndi ana angati anu ndiponso achibale omwe ali kusekondale? _____

7. Ndi mtunda wauali bwanji kuchokera pano kukafika

kusekondale komwe anawo amaphunizira? _____

8. Pali mtunda wautali bwanji kuchokera pano kukafika kusekondale yomwe muli nayo pafupi? _____

GAWO LACHIWIRI

9. Kodi mutapatsidwa mwayi, mwa maudindo otsatirawa, inu mungakonde kutumikira nawo maundindo ati? Chonde perekeni ntchitozo mu mndondomeko mogwirizana ndi kukonda kwana m'malo amene mwapatsidwa pochonga ( ) manambala molingana ndikukonda kwanu:

	1	2	3	4
(a) Kukhala mkabungwe kokonza zamaphunziro monga kuganizirapo zomwe zingamaphunzitsidwe m'sukulu.....				
(b) Kukhala mkabungwe kosungitsa mwambo m'sukulu.....				
(c) Kukhala mkabungwe koona za umoyo ndi kakhalidwe ka ophunzira okhalira kusukulu komweko (Bodin'gi).....				
(d) Kukhala mkabungwe kokonza zomwe zingamaphunzitsidwe paphunziro liri lonse monga: kusankha zipangizo zophunzitsira ndiponso kuphunzirira..				

10. Perekani zifukwa zomwe mwasankhira ntchito ziwiri zoyambazo (1 ndi 2) monga mwakukonda kwanu pamalo omwe mwapatsidwawa.

1. _____
_____
_____

2. _____
_____
_____

11. Malinga ndi momwe mwasankhira pafunso 9, ndi gulu liti mwamagulu otsatirawa lomwe mungagwire nalo bwino ntchito? Chongani ( ) malinga ndi ndondomeko yakukonda kwanu:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
(a) Atsogoleri a Chipani kumudzi.								

(b) A Hedimastala.....
(c) Aphunzitsi.....
(d) Ana asukulu.....
(e) Atsogoleri ampingo.....
(f) Anthu a m'mudzi kapena dela lanu.....
(g) A Insipekitala oyang'anira zamaphunziro.....
(h) A katswiri a za maphunziro...

12. Mwachidule, pelekani zifukwa zomwe mwasankhira magulu oyamba (1 ndi 2) ndi magulu awiri otsiriza (7 ndi 8).

1. _____
_____
2. _____
_____
7. _____
_____
8. _____
_____

13. Ngati pangakhale magulu ena ali onse omwe angakhale nawo m'mabungwewa alembeni pamalo mwapatsidwawa:
_____
_____

14. Kodi muganiza kuti ngati makolo angamakonze nawo ndikuyang'anira za maphunziro zingathandizeko kusintha maphunziro a kusekondale?

Inde _____ Iyayi _____

15. Chifukwa chiyani mukuganiza momwe mwayankhiramu?
_____
_____

16. Pazaka zapitazi, ndi ntchito zanji zokudzana ndimaphunziro a kusekondale zomwe inu munachita nawo. _____

17. Nanga mungathandizepo bwanji pofuna kupititsa mtsogolo maphunziro msukulu za sekondale?
_____
_____

18. Kodi mukudziwa zomwe zimaphunzitsidwa ndikuphunziridwa ku secondale?

Inde _____ Iyayi _____

Ngati yankho lanu ndi inde pafunso 18, yankhaniso funso 19 ndi 20.

19. Kodi maphunziro ndi ntchito za manja zomwe zimaphunzitsidwa kusukulu za kusekondale zimagwirizana ndi zolinga ndi zofuna za anthu?_____
_____

20. Ndimaphunziro anji kapena ntchito ziti zamanja zime mukuganiza kuti zidziphunzitsidwa kwambiri ku sekondale?
_____
_____
_____

21. Kodi mumatsata bwino lomwe zam'mene maphunziro a mwana wanu kapena amene mukumusamalirayo akuyendera? Inde _____ Ayi _____

22. Ngati yankhu lanu ndi "inde", mumatsata bwanji?
_____
_____
_____

23. Kodi pali njira yomwe mumadziwira zakusukulu kupatula kutumiziridwa sukulu lipoti?
_____
_____
_____

24. Kodi m'maganizo anu ndi njiri ziti zomwe zingamathandize ndikupititsa mtsogolo kayendetsedwe kankhani zakusukulu ndiponso zomwe zingakupatseni mwayi monga makolo kutenga nawo mbali pazochitika

msukulu zasekondale?

25. Ophunzira mmasekondale amapeleka fizi. Kodi inu mutafunsidwa kuti muthandizepo popereka ndalama zapadera kapena zina kuti sukulu yomwe mwana kapena m'bale wanu akuphunzirapo ipite mtsogolo, mungapereke?

Inde _____ Ayi _____

26. Pelekani zifukwa za yankho lanu m'munsimu?

27. Kodi nanga kukanapemphedwa kuti mupereke thandizo kusekondale iri yonse ngakhale komwe kulibe omudziwa, mukadapereka?

Inde _____ Ayi _____

28. Perekani zifukwa zayankho lomwe mwapelekalo.

29. Ngati pali ndemanga yomwe ingaperekedwe kukhudzana ndi zamaphunziro a kusekondale chonde ilembeni m'malo mwapatsidwa m'munsimu.

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